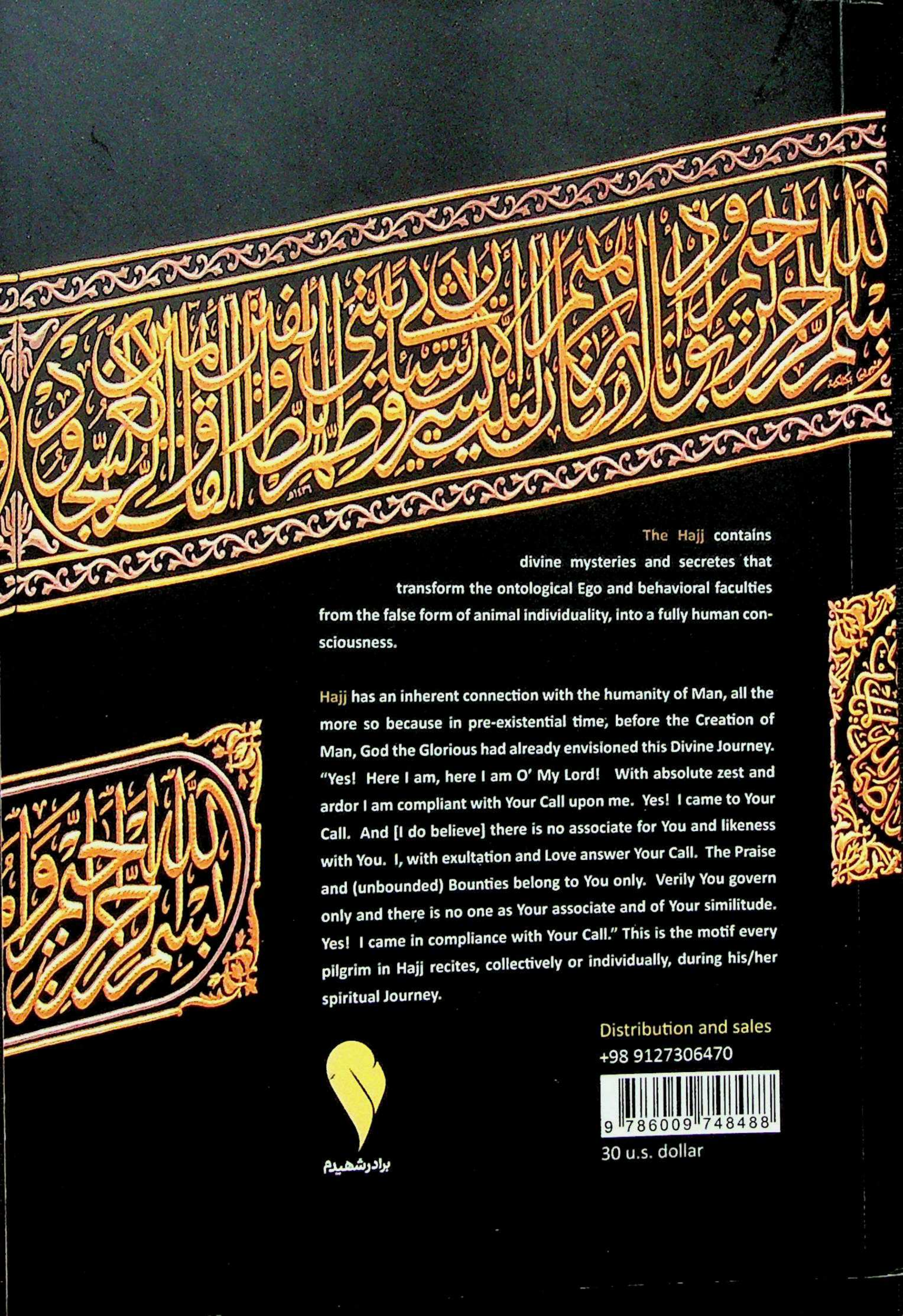
ولله على الناس حج البيت من استطاع إليه سبيلا ومن كفر فإن الله غني عن

HAJJ

Mortezā Aghā Tehrāni



The Hajj contains divine mysteries and secretes that transform the ontological Ego and behavioral faculties from the false form of animal individuality, into a fully human consciousness.

Hajj has an inherent connection with the humanity of Man, all the more so because in pre-existential time, before the Creation of Man, God the Glorious had already envisioned this Divine Journey. "Yes! Here I am, here I am O' My Lord! With absolute zest and ardor I am compliant with Your Call upon me. Yes! I came to Your Call. And [I do believe] there is no associate for You and likeness with You. I, with exultation and Love answer Your Call. The Praise and (unbounded) Bounties belong to You only. Verily You govern only and there is no one as Your associate and of Your similitude. Yes! I came in compliance with Your Call." This is the motif every pilgrim in Hajj recites, collectively or individually, during his/her spiritual Journey.

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m.aghatehrani@gmail.com
baradar.shahid@gmail.com
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Preface to English Translation

While further clarifications may be needed, below we have attempted to mention a few notes that will be useful when reading this English version of the Journey of Love: "Flee from all that which is not Him, Wilāyat, Irfān and the Essence of Ḥajj."

The names of Prophets, of Her Holiness Fāṭima az-Zahrā and of all the Holy Imāms are followed by, respectively, the abbreviated expression "S.W.A." and "S.M.A." which stands for "May Allāh's Infinite, Everlasting Blessings and Peace be Upon him/her/them," quoted according to the person, plural or singular.

The original words and expressions—sometimes arcane, at other times purely technical adopted by the Author, who is one of the leading experts and 'Ulamā in Islamic Ethics, Moral Theology , Sha'rīa Law[1] and Mysticism (Irfān)—originate directly from the Qur'ānic lexicon, the Ḥadīth (or Statements Verbatim, the traditions, sayings of the Prophet

---

[1] Sha'rīah Law is the divinely revealed Law of Islam. M.S.

(s.w.a.) and Holy Imāms of God (s.m.a.) as well as from the monumental intellectual and spiritual masterpieces of early Islam, and from the prolific works of Prominent 'Ulamā. Therefore, in this translated version we did not employ the technique of universal transliteration. Following the IJMES Transliteration table provided, we have adopted one single manner of transliteration of both Farsi and Arabic into English, to facilitate the readability and fluency of sentences. We have attempted with All-Mighty God's Mercy, as best and as easily comprehensible as possible in English, and at the same time, to preserve the originality and authenticity of this extraordinary writing in Farsi.

Furthermore, certain words in English and Farsi have lost their force or are no longer suitable in the English language context. Therefore, some Latin words and terminology have been at times utilized in their stead.

As using the masculine gender as a universal personal pronoun is no longer the practice in English, in this present translation, we have tried to avoid, as much as possible, the exclusive use of masculine pronouns. However, there are some passages where such usage was unavoidable.

For the translation of the verses (āyah), we tried to benefit directly from the Author's original writing. However, on several occasions, we used the translated versions of the Qur'ān in English (The Holy Qur'ān translated by S.V.Mir Aḥmad 'Alī, New York 2004. The Holy Qur'ān translated by 'Abdullāh Yūsuf 'Alī, Maryland U.S.A. 2004.), in French (Le Koran tradition nouvelle. E. Montet, Paris 1929. The Remarques critiques sur le style et la syntaxe du Coran. Th.Noldeke. Paris, 1953), and Italian editions such as L.Bonelli, Il Corano, Milano, 1940, II Edizione) to mention only a few.

In order to facilitate a quick reference to the Holy Qur'ān within the footnotes, we first denote the blessed Ṣūrah (Chapter) number, then its title followed by the number of the revered Āyah (or verse).

This English translated version does not do justice to the original Farsi. However, through the minutiae descriptions of the external rituals and events of the pilgrimage Ḥajj, one should perceive the innermost essence of mere Devotion. It is a spiritual journey unfolding inner stages of rituals of overpowering spiritual development, a journey within a journey, guiding force toward Tawhīd.

We join the author in expressing our gratitude to All-Merciful God for this humble work, written and translated in genuine sincere intention. We wish only for God's Mercy and the satisfaction of His Last Vicar on earth, the Supreme Master of divine Justice, the living and conclusive Proof of God before Humanity ,the Awaited Imām, His Holiness Imām-i Zamān (May God Hasten his sublime Return) who Initiates Man into the Ultimate Wisdom. It is He who protects us, comforts us, and guides us on the straight path toward Allāh.

Muḥammad Ṣabbāghī
15 of the Supreme Month of Sha'bān 1429 of Ḥijrah/ August 17, 2009
Seattle, Washington

IJMES TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM FOR ARABIC, PERSIAN, AND TURKISH

CONSONANTS

A = Arabic, P = Persian, OT = Ottoman Turkish, MT = Modern Turkish

	A	P	OT	MT		A	P	OT	MT		A	P	OT	MT
ء	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	—	ز	z	z	z	z	ك	k	k *or* g	k *or* ñ	k *or* n
ب	b	b	b	b *or* p	ژ	—	zh	j	j				*or* y	*or* y
پ	—	p	p	p	س	s	s	s	s				*or* ğ	*or* ğ
ت	t	t	t	t	ش	sh	sh	ş	ş	گ	—	g	g	g
ث	th	s̱	s̱	s	ص	ṣ	ṣ	ṣ	s	ل	l	l	l	l
ج	j	j	c	c	ض	ḍ	ż	ż	z	م	m	m	m	m
چ	—	ch	ç	ç	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	t	ن	n	n	n	n
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	h	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	z	ه	h	h	h[1]	h[1]
خ	kh	kh	h	h	ع	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	—	و	w	v *or* u	v	v
د	d	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	g *or* ğ	g *or* ğ	ي	y	y	y	y
ذ	dh	ẕ	ẕ	z	ف	f	f	f	f	ة	a[2]			
ر	r	r	r	r	ق	q	q	ḳ	k	ال	[3]			

[1] When h is not final. [2] In construct state: at. [3] For the article, al- and -l-.

VOWELS

		ARABIC AND PERSIAN	OTTOMAN AND MODERN TURKISH	
Long	ا or ى	ā	ā	words of Arabic and Persian origin only
	و	ū	ū	
	ي	ī	ī	
Doubled	ـيّ	iyy (final form ī)	iy (final form ī)	
	ـوّ	uww (final form ū)	uvv	
Diphthongs	وْ	au *or* aw	ev	
	ىْ	ai *or* ay	ey	
Short	ـَ	a	a *or* e	
	ـُ	u	u *or* ü / o *or* ö	
	ـِ	i	ı *or* i	

For Ottoman Turkish, authors may either transliterate or use the modern Turkish orthography.

bismillahi ar-raḥmāni ar-raḥīm
In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

“The spiritual steps of the Ḥajj, which are of vital importance to the eternal life (ab aeterno) and which elevate Man toward the spiritual horizon of Tawhīd and Tanzīh[1], are not attainable unless all devotional rules and injunctions are followed unmistakably and performed meticulously and completely.”

His Eminence Imām Khomaīnī (May God elevates his rank in Paradise).

---

[1] The terms tawhīd and tanzīh could refer to the two highest degrees of mysticism and spirituality, which tend toward Absolute Divine Unity (Oneness), which, in its part, demands the negation, the rejection (tanzīh) of all human attributes and relations to Divine Ipseity (Essence, Selfness) of God (exalted be His praise), Who in His transcendent quality of omnipresence is outside of any analogical attribute. In this sense, man could reach the step of divine purity (Tanzīh), in mind and soul, to be then reaching the level of spirituality of Tawhīd. Therefore, only those who can abstract and renounce all individuālly created worldly and spiritual attestations, only then they can perceive the utmost horizon of the moneity, tawhīd. See also Apophatic Theology. M.S.

■ INTRODUCTION

There are many people who have dogmatic faith in Islam, and have seen or heard its exoteric, outer aspect, but remain un-aware of its esoteric, inner meaning. There are also some who, overjoyed, claim to possess the inner knowledge but underestimate the value of its external aspects. In truth, both groups err; the first is stranded midway, and the second, having foretasted some delightful scent of faith, has been distracted and traveled astray from the Path.

Among the major monotheistic religions, Islam is the most complete and comprehensive of all. Its Messenger is the Last Messenger, and the Religion revealed through him is the Seal of religions until the End of Time.

Islam, in its fullest form, is comprised of precepts, rules, and commandments that have a profound, formative influence on Man, and include both exoteric and esoteric dimensions. The ranks of Prophethood and of Imāmhood, as well as the Qur'ān, deal with both the exoteric aspect which is the Shar'īa (Islamic law), and Prophethood, and bespeak of the esoteric form, which is Imāmhood. The Ḥajj pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allāh, Ka'ba—like any other form of worship and prayer in Islam—has an exoteric, outer aspect and an esoteric, inner essence.

This writing attempts to consider and express both qualities. A further focus of this book is to present information useful for the pilgrim to the Sacred House of God and to the Prophet's Sacred Precinct and his Holy Ahl al-Baīt, the Holy Divinely Elected members of the Prophetic House (may the infinite blessing of God be upon them).

Lastly, this book is a special attempt to address the needs of Muslims residing outside of the various Islamic nations. It has been written in

Farsi and in English, and with God's grace, will be published in both new versions.

The Islamic Institute of New York published the first edition of this book. This year Shafagh Publication (in Qum, Iran)[1] has published its second edition with some additional notes.

We are thankful to God the High for His Mercy and for this book's success. We hope that this humble work will originate from absolute sincerity and its goal will be only to gain the Almighty's satisfaction, and be accepted by His Holiness The Beloved Master, the Imām-i Zamān, (may our souls be his ransom) and may it be a provision in the path to his guidance, to his supreme nearness and his intercession to God (exalted be His praise). Amen.

Murteẓā Āghā Tihrānī
29 Dhī al-Qa'dah, 1429 of Ḥijrah

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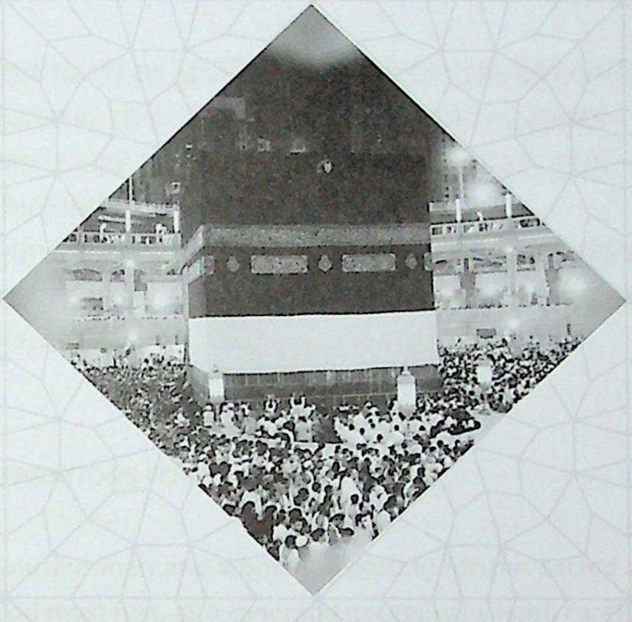
[1] The Cultural Center of Rāh-i Rizvān (The Path of Paradise) will publish its revised English edition.



THE ḤAJJ TO THE SACRED HOUSE OF ALLĀH

IN THE NAME OF ALLĀH THE BENEFICENT THE MERCIFUL
PRAISED BE TO ALLĀH (Only) THE LORD OF UNIVERSES
INFINITE MAY ALLĀH'S BLESSING AND PEACE BE UPON
MUḤAMMAD
HIS DIVINE PROGENIES, ESPECIALLY UPON ALLĀH'S REMNANT
ON EARTH (MAY ALLĀH THE GLORIOUS HASTEN HIS SUBLIME
REAPPARENCE)

■ PREPARATIONS FOR THE ḤAJJ

Every Muslim man and woman departing for the Sacred House of Glorious God must first, as a canonical necessity (wājeb), carefully verify and finalize certain affairs. Carelessness resulting in unfinished issues (be it financial, social or personal) will cause the nullification of the Ḥajj. Among the preliminary tasks are the following:

1. **TAGHLĪD (Emulation):** Every Muslim must know and choose a spiritual leader, and then conform to him, carefully following step by step his theological ritualistic guidance throughout the journey.

Each pilgrim must keep in mind that the 'Ulamā' and Marja` at-Taghlīd (the reference source of Emulation)[1] may have differing formal legal opinions (fatwā) regarding some of the Ḥajj rituals. While performing the rituals, switching from one Marja' Taghlīd to another is not permissible, and one must follow the leader that she or he has committed to. It is worthy to note that the one who himself reaches the level of Ijtihād, he cannot emulate other Mujtahids[2].

2. **VERIFICATION OF FINANCIAL AFFAIRS:** At times one is indebted to one or more persons. Prior to commencing the pilgrimage, any debt must be compensated to the rightful owner(s) in any way possible, or pardon (halālīat) requested and granted.
3. **VERIFICATION OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR:** At times one has unknowingly disrupted or unjustly vexed another human being—God's creature. Prior to the Ḥajj, one must sincerely ask forgiveness from the individual(s) that he or she has violated, and show repentance by beseeching the Merciful God for His forgiveness.
4. **VERIFICATION OF (GOD'S) FINANCIAL AFFAIRS:** In general terms, all Muslim individuals who work or have a continuous and consistent income must pay the khums, or twenty percent of their remaining annual income after all expenses, which includes

---

[1] Marja' at-Taghlīd or Mujtahid, is the one who has reached the stage where he possesses outstanding learning and knowledge as well as the Taghwā (Piety) to the point where he can explain in the minutest details and explicitly exegeses and interprets the divine Laws contained in the Holy Qur'ān and Ḥadīth and the authentic sayings (Statements Verbatim) of the Prophet (s.w.a.) and the Holy Immaculate Imāms (s.m.a.). M.S.

[2] This matter is based upon an Intellectual Reasoning.

the blessed share of the Imām-i Zamān (may God the Most Highest hasten His Reappearance) and the share of Ṣādāt (the descendants of the Holy Imāms, may God proliferate their blessed kinship). These shares must be paid to the Pilgrim's Mujtahid or his deputy. If not paid, the pilgrim's wealth is indebted; she or he sustains an unlawful financial impurity (ḥarām). As such, any unpaid khums nullifies the Pilgrim's Ḥajj.

5. **VERIFICATION OF DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS:** It is possible that in a Muslim's past, he or she has underperformed or at times omitted the prescribed daily prayers (Ṣalāts), and been likewise lax in completing the daily fasts required during the holy month of Ramaḍān. In this case, a program to compensate for the neglected prayers and fasts must be organized and performed.
6. **THE NECESSARY RECOMMENDATIONS (WILL) FOR THOSE LEFT BEHIND:** Before the Pilgrim's departure, it is appropriate to write one's will, which also provides for the post-mortem fulfillment of the previous recommendation.[1]
7. **EDUCATION ABOUT THE ḤAJJ RITUALS (MANĀSIK):** It is extremely important for the pilgrim to learn about the prescribed Ḥajj rituals prior to their departure, so that on-site, the pilgrim can perform his or her rituals readily and correctly.
8. **PREPARATION OF PROVISIONS:** Prior to departure, the pilgrim must prepare their Iḥrām (the specific garb for Ḥajj and its rituals). The Iḥrām consists of simply two white un-sewed towels for brothers and white un-garnished clothing for sisters. It is also

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[1] In the case that a person dies without compensating for omitted daily prayers (Salāt) and fasts, someone shall perform them for him or her postmortem. M.S.

appropriate to prepare necessary and/or worthwhile personal items.

■ THE ḤAJJ

Ḥajj is one of the prescribed obligations of the religion, a fundamental precept of the Practice of the Faith (furu-i dīn) in Islam. The Ḥajj is a majestic, sublime journey of worship, mandated in the Noble Qur'ān as follows: ***"And [purely] for God, the Ḥajj to the House of God is incumbent upon mankind for those who can afford it, and whoever denieth, then verily God is needless of the worlds."***[1]

From this auspicious Āyah three clear points are generally deduced:

1. The Ḥajj must be performed with pure intent and absolute dedication to God the High only.
2. The Ḥajj is compulsory for everyone who is financially able to undertake it—that is, for those who could undertake the Ḥajj and return to an unchanged financial situation.
3. Once the pilgrim starts the Ḥajj, it is apostasy to abandon the rituals in the middle of the journey, even though the deserting pilgrim may consider and claim to be a Muslim, and appear as such.

---

[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 Al-e Imrān (The Family of Imrān),97.

THE FERVENT WISH FOR ḤAJJ

"God's banquet" commences with the holy month of and ends with the holy month of Dhi-l-Ḥajjih, that is, the end of the Ḥajj rituals. The expression of "banquet"[1] originates directly from the transcribed corpus of statements (Verbatim) uttered by the Prophet, and by the Ahlal-Baīt (may the blessing of God be upon them) as of the Merciful's Banquet (Ḍiāfat ar-Raḥmān).

Referring to the holy month of Ramaḍān as the month of God's banquet implies that Ramaḍān is a bountiful and divine month, wherein each Muslim has the potential to attain from a magnificent, limitless Divine Table in proportion to the respective degree of his or her spiritual efforts. These efforts reflect spiritual aptitude but gain more value from the sincerity of intention, the intensity of concentration in cultivating spiritual energy in heart and mind, and dedication to performing the daily devotional prayers, or ṣalāt.

The main point is that the Host with the spiritual banquet educates and trains His guest, showing him or her what spiritual consciousness and salvation looks like, and giving him or her the keys to discover it. One of the most salient and stimulating prayer (duā) of the month of Ramaḍān eagerly asks God for the pilgrimage of Ḥajj to the sacred House of God:

> ***O' my Lord ....Bestow upon me, this year and the years to come, the Ḥajj to Your Sacred House and the Pilgrimage to your Apostle's grave as well as his Ahl al-Baīt's (s.m.a)***

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[1] The word "banquet" implies mystical repast. Spiritual nourishment for those who hunger for true Knowledge and Love. M.S.

graves; deprive me not from being present (witness) in those honorable, majestic locations and sites.[1]

It is precisely from here that the guest of God, being present first in the sumptuous guest room of the auspicious month of Ramaḍān, receives another invitation, which is to embark on the Ḥajj to the sacred House of God, as well as the pilgrimage to Holy Ahl al-Baīt and Holy Imāms. Without a doubt, during this spiritual journey of ascendancy toward spiritual perfections when tasks are performed with devotion and sincerity in heart and in mind, every earthly veil one by one will be lifted for the pilgrim. The Voyager[2] feels a more and more fervent need to step further into higher levels of spiritual consciousness, and ask for yet further and deeper inner illuMination.

During the holy month of Ramaḍān, each and every Muslim who attended the banquet of the Lord and gave his or her prayers and devotions during the fasting, to have them accepted by God, will be granted another invitation to embark on the journey to yet Higher Spirituality. Certainly, the more Man possesses, the more eagerly he seeks. Some may call this psychological state of further seeking "greed", which generally implies a negative desire. In the Holy Qur'ān however, this specific kind of greed is eulogized and encouraged; it is esteemed, as it not only sidesteps negativity but brings to the seeker gains of priceless spiritual value. In the Qur'ān, God the High does refer to the

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1. Muḥaddis Qumī (Mafātīh al-Jinān), the Abū Thamālī prayer.
2. In Farsi, the word sālik (seeker), could mean Homo Viator, a Voyager, a pilgrim desirous of performing Ḥajj, and who succeeds in leaving behind all of the ephemeral wealth, power and affections for a spiritual exodus, an inner as well as outer journey, a 'solitary' spiritual migrant. M.S.

faithful believers as greedy: "***There is a group [of people] who pray unto their Lord in awe and [in] greed***'.[1] The more "greed" intensifies and the sincere yearning in heart and soul increases, the more the spiritual seeker—the Pilgrim—at each Highest level of Spirituality possesses more awe and love of God (taghwā),[2] and earnestly seeks for more.

This "greed" (or "hope") is the motif of God's proclamation in the following Āyah, saying: "***O' faithful believers! Call to your Lord in awe and greed.***" [3] The call to greedily seek has also been confirmed by the Holy Immaculate Imāms (s.m.a.) as documented in the Ḥadīth (Traditions): "*O' Lord! The more You bestow, the more your generosity increases.*" However, this Ḥadīth requires further study and explanation. It could be "translated" this way also: "O' Lord! The more You give, the more the receiver of Your divine favor will become capable of being worthy to have more of Your Prodigious Generosity." In either case, as in previous quotes, the message is clear that the more the Lord bestows the more the spiritual seeker, the servant of the Lord has the intellectual preparation and spiritual vision, as well as perceptual consciousness (Ma`rifah), to perceive, to receive more of His Sheer Generosity. Embedded in this message is the fact that God is the Absolute Perfect, and not subject to the act of growing and of becoming. The growth, the evolution, finds its meaning in His servants and His creatures. Growth is incumbent upon all God's creatures, and the highest form of growth for humans is spiritual growth. Therefore we should never come short asking God for His uncountable, unlimited Mercy and Generosity.

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 32 al-Sajdah (The Prostration), 16.
2. Taghwā in this context could also mean self-cautiousness against. (Precaution) and at the same time God-mindedness. M.S.
3. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 7 al-Ar'āf (The Elevated Places), 56.

We hope to be placed amongst, God willing, His selected ones to accede to His Highest Royal Court, and eagerly search Him only and be among those admitted to His Divine Proximity.

THE ATTAINMENT OF ḤAJJ AND ITS PERMANENT GRACE

Financial capability permitting, once the spiritual seeker—the pilgrim—is ready, he or she is honored by being admitted to performing the Ḥajj. This acceptance occurs the first time in the Pilgrim's lifetime, other successive journeys are certainly recommended but not obligatory, and of course, present multiple gracious spiritual attainments.

The recommendation to perform the Ḥajj has been so decisively reaffirmed by the Wilāyat's[1] Authority that His Holiness Imām as-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) once reproved one of his companions as follows:

What happened to you?! Why did not you go to Ḥajj this year?! Borrow money from someone and perform your Ḥajj again, because Ḥajj is a corroborated recommendation that Muslims ought to perform repeatedly; because the Ḥajj is the Highest of devotional prayers.[2]

In the several statements made by all Holy Ahl al-Baīt (s.m.a.) all Muslims are frequently encouraged to perform Ḥajj many times—at the correct proportion of their physical and/or financial capacity— in their life time. For instance, Samā ibn Mehrān said:

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[1] The Terminology Velāyat stands for Spiritual Ministry of the Holy Imāms (Ahl al-Bait) (s.m.a.) as the source of Spiritual guidance of Mankind toward the very inner Essence of the Revelation of God. Thus the Velāyat—as an essentiating factor to spiritual growth and consciousness—is a divinely commissioned Mission, assigned only to holy Imāms (s.m.a.) to lead man into the esoteric meaning of the prophetic Mission. M.S.

[2] Shaikh Ṣadduq, the Book of Taḥdhīb Vol.5, p. 441.

His Holiness Imām as-Ṣādiq[1] (s.m.a.) asked me: 'Why did not you go to the Ḥajj this year?' 'Because', I replied, 'I had some commercial contracts to fulfill with people and other affairs to take care of; I hope these affairs that impeded me from going to Ḥajj this year be propitious.' 'By God' His Holiness warned dismissively, 'God does not consider propitious any affair which prevented you from performing the Ḥajj. No one has been deprived of the Ḥajj except by one's own committed sin; but, certainly, God's forgiveness and Mercy are greater than the sins committed by Man."[2]

PERFORMING THE ḤAJJ FOR THE IMMACULATE IMĀMS (s.m.a.)

The Highest and the most spiritually rewarding Ḥajj that is recommended (but not compulsory) is the one performed on behalf of God's Representative (Ulīā Allāh) as if the pilgrim is the deputy of the beloved Ahl al-Baīt (s.m.a.) during the Ḥajj. This statement is validated by the Holy Imāms. For instance, Mūsā Ibn Abūlqāsim once said,

"I brought to the Imām al-Jawād's[3] attention (s.m.a.) the topic of performing Ḥajj for the Ahlal-Baīt by informing His Holiness that I decided to perform Ṭawāf (circumambulation around the Ka'ba) [for

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1. Imām Ja`far as-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) was born in Madīnah. His date of birth varies 80 A.H./699 A.D, 83 A.H/702 A.D. or 86 A.H./705 A.D. His martyrdom occurred in Madīnah in 148 A.H/765 A.D. M.S.
2. Ayatullah Dastqaīb; the Kabīrah (Grand) sins.
3. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn-i 'Alī (s.m.a.), known by the titles at-Taqi (the God-fearing) and al Javād (the Generous), was born in Madīnah in 195 A.H/810 A.D. and martyred in Baghdad in 220 A.H. /835 A.D. M.S.

him and for his] ancestral fathers, but that some objected to my decision, asserting that it is not allowed to perform Ṭawāf for the Divine Imāms. His Holiness replied to me, 'Do the Ṭawāf, and perform it as much as you can because it is allowed.'

After three years, I had the privilege to be in his presence again, and I said: 'O' my Master! Some years ago I asked your leave to perform the Ṭawāf for you and for your forefathers. In so doing, I sensed something profound in my heart.'

'What was it?' His Holiness asked.

'One day,' I replied, 'I performed the Ṭawāf and dedicated it to the Holy Prophet.' As soon as His Holiness heard the name of the Messenger of God, he reverently pronounced 'May the Infinite Blessing and Peace be upon Him' three times

'Then in subsequent days, I did the Ṭawāf for Imām 'Alī, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn, down to the tenth day in which I did the Ṭawāf for you. O' my Master! I choose the Wilāyat [1] of these Magnanimous Divine souls as my Religion.'

His Holiness then said, 'Now you truly reached God's Religion; without this initiation, you would not have reached it'.

'But,' I replied, 'I cannot perform the Ṭawāf for your Holy Mother Fāṭimah (s.m.a.)[2], even with my inmost desire and dedication and perseverance, I just cannot perform Ṭawāf for Her Holiness.'

'Keep trying,' he advised, 'It is, God willing, the most sublime ritualistic deed you could perform during the Ḥajj.'[3]

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[1] In this context, Wilāyat is the initiation to the esoteric, inner dimension of the Prophethood. M.S.

[2] Fāṭimah (s.m.a.), the genealogical Mother of the Holy Imāms (s.m.a.). M.S.

[3] Muḥaddis Qumī, the book of Montahal Amal Muntahā al-Ámāl (the Ultimate desires) Vol. 2 p. 581.

▪ THE PROPHET OF ISLAM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ḤAJJ INTO ITS PERFECTION

Most of the Ḥajj rituals were initially established legislatively by the Prophet Abraham, the intimate friend of God (s.m.a.). The Last Prophet of Allāh (s.w.a.) laid out the last pillar of it, and in its perfection. He added a few rituals and obliterated some customary tribal laws and primitive form of worship of the pre-Islamic era (the Era of Ignorance) which had adulterated the original Abrahamic Pilgrimage of the Ḥajj. By removing primitive tribal laws and rituals, the Ḥajj was no longer a monopoly of a certain reigning family or tribe. Instead, Ḥajj belongs to all humanity, and in truth, it has become the main practice of unity for all Muslims. The elements and/or rituals established or changed by the Prophet of Islam are the following:

1. The fixation of five Miqāts (the Places of Appointment), which are the locations where one enters the state of Iḥrām before proceeding toward the Ḥaram (Sacred Circumscribed Zone).

2. The implemented requirement to wear only Iḥrām, which consists of two unsewn white garbs for men and white undecorated clothing for women.
3. Before Islam, the recitation of the Labbaīk was reduced into a pagan, ungodly statement. The Prophet (s.w.a) transformed it into the purest form of Tawhīd.
4. Most of the religious rules of unlawfulness and lawfulness while preparing for the state of Iḥrām, and while being in the state of Iḥrām, (standards which in the pre-Islamic era were unheard of) were everlastingly established.
5. On the ninth day of the holy month of Dhi-l-Ḥajj ah, the month of Ḥajj, the stop on the plain of Arafāt was only for non-Makkans (for outsiders) but the Holy Qur'ān made this stop a devotional duty for everyone, in the following statement: "Then, march you on from whence all the other people pour down [towards 'Arafāt]."[1]
6. The polytheists of the tribe of Quraish were halting in 'Arafāt, then before the sunset marching towards Muzdalefah (a territory about midway between Arafāt and Minā). The Prophet of God (s.w.a.) abolished this pagan tradition so that everyone would leave in multitude after the sunset towards plain Muzdalefah. Therefore, no one had any social privilege of any kind over others.
7. Only non-Makkans were stopping in the plain of Masha'r al Ḥaram; tribes living in Makkah arrogantly were not. The Prophet of Islam, with God's Command, rebuked these tribal privileges and made it obligatory for everyone to stop in Masha`r al Ḥaram with the following Āyah :

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah (The Heifer), 199.

"***On your return from Arafāt [to the Sacred House of God], in Masha'r al Ḥaram, [keep] remembering [and praising] God.***"[1]

8. In pre-Islamic times, the pilgrims to Makkah were obliged to consume food purchased from the residents in Makkah only, and Hal (food from outside the Sacred City of Makkah) was prohibited. Islam lifted this restriction through the following Āyah, which said, "***Say [O' Our Apostle Muḥammad] who has prohibited the adornments and the pure things God has brought forth for His servants?***"[2]
9. Before Islam, staying under the non-leather tents were not allowed. Islam abrogated this restriction.
10. Before Islam, roasting food or cooking dried whey was not allowed. Islam Valīdated both practices.
11. The Prophet of Islam (s.w.a.) abrogated all privileges that the elitist rulers of some Arab tribes—especially the Quraish—were enjoying. The Apostle of God (s.w.a.) made everybody equally accountable to God's precepts and rules.
12. In the pre-Islamic period, it was the Pagan custom to slaughter the sacrificial beast (Qurbānī) in the proximity of Mount of Ṣafā and of Marwah. The Prophet of Islam uprooted this particular tradition belonging to the pre-Islamic Era of Ignorance.
13. In the distance between the two Hillocks of Ṣafā and Marwah, a monument had been constructed around which the pilgrims of the time circulated. The Prophet of God (s.w.a.) demolished this monument.

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣurah 2 al-Baqarah (The Heifer), 198

[2] Qur'ān Ṣūrah 3 Āl-i Imrān (The Family of Imrān), 32. (the adornments in this specific verse specifically mean the adornments made lawful by God the High)

14. The Prophet of God (s.w.a.) also abolished the pagan tradition which instructed people to perform the Ṭawāf between the two Mounts of Ṣafā and Marwah.

THE DIVINE SECRETS OF THE ḤAJJ

At this stage of our discussion, we approach a few secrets of the Pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allāh. By more deeply perceiving and understanding the esoteric, pure inner essence of the Ḥajj, the pilgrim learns to proceed with a more pure and devoted heart on the mystical path towards Nearness to God (exalted be His praise).

A PRELUDE TO THE DIVINE SECRETS OF THE ḤAJJ

Etymologically, the word Ibādat (to worship, to pray in a humbled and spiritual state) can be most accurately explained through a theological critique, and the word of Ziāfat (Banquet) can be explained by the deifying Secrets of ebādat itself. In order for ebādat to be the true move toward God the High, its starting point must originate from the absolute sincerity of Nīyah (intention) and concentration of spiritual energy in mind and in the heart.

The Ḥajj is one the greatest forms of ebādat and is not an exception to this general rule. The more sincerity, humility, and concentration there is in performing the divine rituals, the more the pilgrim gains the everlasting spiritual Attainment, Grace, and accomplishment, known in Arabic as sawāb. The level of sawāb attained from prayers is proportionally determined by the level (degree) of purity, humility, and sincerity Man has in mind and in the heart while performing them. No doubt, the pureness, and sincerity of an action depends utterly on the level and degree of the person's Spiritual Perception, Gnosis (Ma`refa) and Knowledge.[1] Therefore, the more knowledge a person has about the essence of the rituals of the Ḥajj, the purer the person will be in spiritual intention, and the more willing, humble, and sincere in making the decisions leading towards the ultimate Goal. This Goal is to deify all the actions in everyday life. In other words, Man must first "cognize'' so that in proportion, his understanding can be "sincere in undertaking any given action." Any knowledge man has, not just knowledge in regard to the Ḥajj, should be proportionally appreciated for its value. "*He or she who knows him or herself appreciates the true value of his or her 'Self 'as well.*"[2] We do not have any "Knowledge" of God the High as He "is". "*O' Lord! Never we have known You as we ought to know You.*"[3] Therefore, our absolute incapacity to know Him causes a lack of esteem for Him; "***They esteem not God the estimation due to Him.***"[4]

The Ḥajj rituals are no exception. Without a doubt, if one does not comprehend the essence of the Ḥajj, one cannot perform it with the due pureness of intention in mind and heart. Every form of worship and prayer has its inner meaning.

Every stage-ritual of the Ḥajj has its own hidden meaning which we will, God willing, elucidate at least in part.

THE TRUE ESSENCE OF ḤAJJ

The Holy Qur'ān states: "***O' you who (faithfully) believe! Escape (at***

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[1] In the sense of mystical cognition. M.S.

[2] The Self here is not the Self of the psychologists. M.S.

[3] Majlisi, Muḥammad Bāqir. Bihār al-Anwar. Vol.2, p.32 (ibid, Vol.68, p.23)

[4] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 6 al-An'ām (The Cattle), 91.

once) all of you unto Allāh."[1]

It has been reported in Rawāyats (Verbatims) from all the Holy Imāms (s.m.a.) that in this Āyah, to "escape" means performing the devotional rituals of Ḥajj. This journey is an inner migration from ungodliness toward God the Glorious. It is self-evident that God's Presence was, is, and will be everywhere. "And He is Who is the God in the heavens and on the earth."[2] "***And He is with you wherever you are.***"[3]

The spiritual pathway to God means the complete self-abandonment to God's Will; it means the escape from anything that has an ungodly taint, and the adoption of a straightforward direction towards the All-Glorious God, such that only He is eagerly desired.

This inner exodus must not, albeit unwittingly, be contaminated by entertainment, business, fame or by any ungodly goals. In this journey, the pilgrim must not rely on provisions, outfits, friends, companionship, commercial affairs, and so forth, which may divert this spiritual journey from "being towards God".

Therefore, before the start of this journey, all the preparations (taking care of financial affairs, organizing a will in case of death, etc.) must be completed and directed towards God the High so that a true Ḥajj will be fulfilled.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANITY AND THE ḤAJJ

Ḥajj has an inherent connection with the humanity of Man, all the more so because in pre-existential time, before the Creation of Man, God the Glorious had already envisioned this Divine Journey.

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 51 al-Zariyāt (The Scatterers), 50.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 43 al-Zukhruf (Ornaments of Gold), 84.
3. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 57 al-Ḥadīd (Iron), 4.

Zurārah, one of the most skilled jurists in Sharia' Law, and one of the most loyal companions and novices of both Imām As-Ṣādiq and Imām al-Bāqir Bāqir (s.m.a.) says:

> "I presented this statement to His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.): 'It is forty years I am asking clarification about Ḥajj's rituals and that your Holiness ratifies your fatwā (final Verdict) about them.' His Holiness replied, '*Oh Zorarah! Even given forty years, how could one exhaustively explain all the themes about a House which was worshipped two thousand years before the Creation of Adam?!*'"[1]

This Holy Imām's statement relates the Ḥajj directly to the Time of the Creation of Man. The man has the inner need of this ancient primordial Construction (the Ka'ba) to reach and access the Divine Court of God. Standing in the Ka'ba proximity, man repents, and out of contrition, weeps; he beseeches earnestly for the forgiveness of all of his heedless deeds and misconducts.

THE ḤAJJ 'S SECRETS ACCORDING TO IMĀM AS SAJJĀD (s.m.a.):

We do have several references about the Ḥajj's secrets and mysteries from the immaculate Holy Imāms (s.m.a.). These references are of cardinal importance and ought to be studied attentively. However, the historical reference that more than any other Rawāyat (Verbatim) recapitulates all that is essential for the rituals, is a sacred Ḥadīth by

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1. Kulaīnī, Muḥammad Ibn Yaqub, Kāfī, vol.5, p. 187- 188.

His Holiness Imām Zaynul-Abidin[1] (the ornament of worshipers)(s.m.a.) which is introduced and summarized in the following paragraphs.

At this point, there will be little attempt to supplement the Imām's original dialogue with any other explanation, so that the authenticity and spontaneity of the Holy Imām's conversation remain intact. Later on, however, we will explore some of its insights in more detail.

In the dialogue between His Holiness Imām as-Sajjād (s.m.a.) and one of his companions by the name of Shiblī, the Holy Imām first inquires about the rituals of Ḥajj he recently performed and then asks him whether he (Shiblī) had any knowledge about the very essence of each single ritual. In this conversation, the Holy Imām brings together and expounds in an eminent way both the exoteric as well as esoteric details of Sharia' law, opening a new horizon of insight and spiritual knowledge to anyone who bears witness to his explanation.

Shiblī thus narrates the Holy Imām's description of the secrets of the Ḥajj:

> "The same year I was back from the Ḥajj, I found out that His holiness Imām Rawāyats (s.m.a.) also was back in town from Ḥajj. I had the privilege to visit His Holiness and was graced to be received by him. The Imām asked me, '*Shiblī! Did you too perform the Ḥajj?*

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[1] Born and martyred in Madīnah 38 A.H./658 A.D. - 95 A.H./712 A.D. M.S. The Fourth Holy Imām famed with the title as-As Sajjād (the Prostrating one), also known as Zaynul-A'bedin (the ornament of worshipers). He was in continuous prostration prayer (sajdah), day and night. M.S.

Shiblī: 'Yes, O' son of the Apostle of God.'[1]

Imām: *'Did you stop at the Miqāt? And strip yourself of your clothing and cover yourself simply with the garb of Iḥrām? And did you do its relative Qusl?'*[٢]

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'While you were stopping at the Miqāt was it your inmost spiritual intention in your heart and in your mind to abandon your usual vest of sinfulness and wrap yourself with the simple garments of piousness and abstinence, self-restraining from evilness, and live submissively with absolute obedience to God only?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you were stripping yourself of your regular clothing, was it your spiritual intention to strip yourself of deceitfulness and mischievousness?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you were washing your entire body (Qusl) with its relative niah (intention)for entering into the state of Iḥrām, did you remind your inner "I" that "you" have decided to cleanse yourself of*

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[1] Godly son of God.

[2] The complete bath of the entire body prescribed specifically for the state of Ihrām. M.S.

contaminating sin, and with the light of repentance purify yourself?'

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT stop at the Miqāt; you did NOT get out of your regular tailored clothing, and you did NOT perform the Qusl. Now, tell me, did you clean yourself, don the garb of Iḥrām and recite its relative niah (spiritual intention) for the Ḥajj?'*

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'While you were washing your own body and cleansing the "filth" and "impurity" off of it, was it your intention to strip off, to obliterate all the earthly and corruptible matter from your very soul?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'While you were reciting the specific niah (spiritual intention) for the Ḥajj and were stipulating the sacred commitment and solemn promise to God the High, was it your intention to break away from every ungodly pact to liberate (emancipate) yourself from every sort of chain except being wholeheartedly subservient to God only?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT cleanse yourself, you did NOT enter the state of Iḥrām and you did NOT stipulate the Ḥajj's sublime promise* *either. By the way, tell me, when you stopped in Miqāt, did you perform two Rak'at*[1] *for Iḥrām prayer and recite the (motif of) Labbaīk?'*

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'In Miqāt was it the Visitation [to God] your only goal?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'While you were performing the Ṣalāt of Iḥrām —which is the highest form, and highest demonstration, of being an affectionate servant of God—was it your goal to approach Him?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you were reciting the Labbaīk, was it your intention to open your mouth only in obedience to God and to keep it closed to any disobedience of God?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT stop in Miqāt, you did NOT perform the (specific) Ṣalāt of Iḥrām, and you did NOT recite the Labbaīk invocation either. Now tell me, did you enter the Sacred Precinct of Ḥaram? Did you "see" the Ka'ba and did you perform the Ṣalāt there?'*

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[1] Every Salāt is divided in Units (Rakaa`t).M.S.

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'When you entered the Sacred Ḥaram, was it your unhesitating intention to prohibit yourself from gossiping about the people of Islam?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you reached Makkah, did you remind your own "I" that your goal is the pilgrimage toward God?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT enter the Ḥaram, you did NOT see the Ka'ba, did NOT perform the Ṣalāt. Did you perform the Ṭawāf around the Ka'ba? Did you touch lightly, softly the corners and the pillars of the Ka'ba? Did you perform the Sa'ie ('strenuous' walk[1]) between the two Hillocks of Ṣafā and Marvah?'*

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'While you were striving by walking between the two sacred mounts did you remind yourself that you have escaped to God and took refuge in His Safe and Secure House and He, Who is the All-Knower of the inner, hidden secrets is, Himself, protecting you, watching you, witnessing you?'*

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[1] Or, exerting all efforts to one 'goal' only. M.S.

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT perform the Ṭawāf, you did NOT touch the pillars of Ka'ba and you did not walk/strive between the two sacred Hillocks of Ṣafā and Marwah. Did you stipulate the solemn vow of fidelity to God by "joining hands" with the Black Stone (Ḥajar al Aswad)? Did you stand in the proximity of the Place of Abraham (Maqām Ibrāhim) (s.m.a.) and perform two Rak'ats of prayer there?'*

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

All of a sudden, His Holiness Imām as- Sajjād (s.m.a) cried out so intensely that we feared that his Holy soul might at once depart from his body. Then His Holiness said in a broken voice: "*Anyone who shakes hands with the Black Stone is stipulating the sublime divine promise with God All-Mighty Himself. You miserable man! Be vigilant! May you not disregard the awe of this extraordinarily reverent Pact, and with the same hand that shook God's Hand, may you shake not hands with sinfulness, disobedience, and rebellion to nullify the providential Attainment and spiritual remuneration you have gained.*"

Then His Holiness Imām as Sajjād (s.m.a.) continued:

Imām: *'Whilst you were performing the Ṣalāt at the Place of Abraham (s.m.a.), were you reminding your "I" that "you" are emulating the Abrahamic act and—with performing the Ṣalāt at this location—"you" are dominating the Shaiṭān (Satan)?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT stipulate any promise with Ḥajar al Aswad, you did NOT stand in prayer on the same spot where Abraham stood in prayer; therefore you did NOT perform the Ṣalāt at all. Did you drink the water from the sacred Spring of Zamzam?'*[1]

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'In the instant you were drinking it, was it your inmost intention to bend, to lower your head in obedience to God only and to shun away from sinfulness?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT go to the well of Zamzam and you did NOT drink from it. Did you perform the walking/striving back and forth between the Months of Ṣafā and of Marwah?'*

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'While you were walking and striving between the Hillocks of Ṣafā and Marwah did you remind yourself that you are striving between the two extremes, between Awesome Fear and Pure Hope?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

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[1] Near the House of God. M.S.

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT perform fully the rituals between the Ṣafā and Marwah. Did you proceed toward Minā territory?'*

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'When you left Makkah marching towards Minā, were you determined to be and to behave in such a way that people around you would be safe from your hands, tongue, and heart?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT march from Makkah to Minā territory. Did you Sojourn in the plane in Arafāt and ascend the Mountain of Mercy (Jabal al Raḥmah)? Did you come to know, to "meet" the Namarahi Vādi? And in Meil and in Hamarah did you call upon God?'*

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'While you were sojourning in Arafāt did you realize that all Knowledge and wisdom is by Him and originates from Him? Were you aware that Existence itself is in His Hands and that He knows all your inmost hidden secrets, feelings and thoughts?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'While you were ascending the Jabal al Raḥmah (the Mount of Mercy) did you realize that God the High with His total Mercy loves and* *protects every faithful man and woman?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'In Namarah was it your intention not to enjoin anyone (to virtuous life) nor exhort anyone to desist [from Evil] until you first subjugated yourself to God's commands?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you were in the proximity of the two Monuments, the Mountains of Alam and Namarah, did you remember that they are the monumental witnesses of your invocations, prayers, and supplications to All Mighty God, and, accompanied by the Lord's guardians, they are your guardians as well?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT sojourn in 'Arafāt, did NOT ascend the Mountain of Mercy, you did not spiritually perceive the meaning of Namarah and there you did NOT stop nor pray. Did you pass through the Alams and in their proximity, did you perform two Rak'ats of Ṣalāt? And then did you proceed towards the Muzdalefah and collect stones and pebbles? Did you then sojourn in Minā? Did you then stop in Masha'r al Ḥaram?'*

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'When you were performing the prayers (on the tenth night of*

Dhi-l Ḥajj ah) did you consider that particular Ṣalāt as a devotional form of gratitude to God The High Who keeps away the hardships and bestows the ease?'

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you were passing through the Two Alams (Mountains/ Monuments, as two sacred signs of God) while being in the crowd, trying not to deviate neither to the left nor to the right, staying on the main course, was it then your true goal that with all your heart, with your whole soul to stay on the Path of the Religion of Truth?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you left Mozdalefah and collected your pebbles, was it your intent to detach yourself from ignorance and disobedience and approach divine knowledge and wisdom?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you proceeded towards the plain of Masha'r ol Ḥaram was it your intention to prepare yourself for diligence and intelligence, to perceive and feel those who had already reached the level of Taghwā ; to avail your heart and soul to the awe and the love of God?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'You, then, did NOT pass through the two Alams, you did NOT* *perform the prayer there, you did NOT proceed into Mozdalefah, you did NOT gather the pebbles (stones) and you did NOT sojourn in Mashar ol Ḥaram. Now tell me, did you proceed to Minā? Did you "cast" the pebbles [at the Shaītān]? Did you shave your head? Did you perform the act of slaughter, the sacrifice (Qurbānī)? Did you do the Ṣalāt at the Khīf Mosque? And once you went back to Makkah again did you perform the additional Efazah Ṭawāf?'*[1]

Shiblī: 'Yes.'

Imām: *'When you reached Minā and threw the pebbles at the Shaītān, did you reflect that you finally reached your ultimate destination and that God the High had fulfilled all the needs and wishes that you had invoked?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'In that very moment while you were throwing the stones at the Jamarāt, was it the deepest intention and expression of your action to stone the Shaīṭān itself, and expel it away from your "I"?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you was cleansing your head by shaving off its hair, was it your true intention to trim yourself of all the wickedness and the spurious iniquities and the relative grave duties you owed to others as*

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1. For re-entering the Sacred Mosque. M.S.

their consequential effects, dues that were an enslaving yoke on your shoulder; and now by casting them away, to be pure, sinless as when you was born?'

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'While performing the Ṣalāt at the Khīf Mosque was it your true belief that you are not afraid but of your own sins and of God? And did you truly not have any hope but in His Mercy?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you were cutting the sheep's throat, was it your genuine intention to, with assiduity, piousness, and zealousness, actually cut the throat of your own ill desires, rapacity and avarice, and to revivify the legacy of Abraham who brought his beloved son to the place of slaughter as a Devotional Donation dedicated to God the High?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'When you went back to Makkah and performed the Ṭawāf of Return (Efāzah), was it your intention to be back in God's Glory and to pledge Him your devoted obedience, to grip His Friendship, to fulfill His devotional injunctions and to feel you are now finally closer to Him?'*

Shiblī: 'No.'

Imām: *'Then, you did NOT go to Minā, you did NOT throw the stones and pebbles at Shaīṭān, you did NOT shave your head clean, you did NOT offer the Devotional Sacrifice, you did NOT perform the Ṣalāt in the Khīf Mosque, you did NOT perform the Ṭawāf of Return (to the sacred Mosque), and you are NOT closer to God. Go back, then. You did NOT fulfill the Ḥajj .'*

After this dialogue, Shiblī wept much for all the unaccomplished rituals of his Ḥajj. He assiduously worked to excogitate further in regard to the secrets of Ḥajj. He subsequently performed the Ḥajj appropriately, with knowledge and spiritual "perception".

It is up to the dear reader and the pilgrim to the House of Allāh, while carrying out the Ḥajj 's rituals and visits to the Sacred House of God, to pay special attention to the Holy Imām's conversation, and care much for both exoteric (outer) and esoteric (inner) aspects of the rituals. With God's Mercy, the pilgrim will be able to perform the Ḥajj as it ought to be.

■ ḤARAM

No place on this earth has the uniqueness of the Ḥaram. Ḥaram is the only Circumscribed Zone that at every given time of the year, whoever decides to enter it must, in the Miqāt, don the Iḥrām and invoke the Labbaīk.[1]

Henceforth, the enamored pilgrim of God, steeped into deep devotion and humility, proceeds to the Beloved's "quarter"[2] and performs the Ṭawāf and its relative Ṣalāt; then follows, with dedication and love, all the guidelines to perform the Saie` between the two sacred Hillocks of Ṣafā and of Marwah. Then the pilgrim does the Taqseer, which means that he or she shortens his or her hair (or nails) just a bit. At this stage, the pilgrim removes his or her Iḥrām, and thus removes him or herself from the state of being Muḥrim.

Non-Muslims, simply by not being Muslim, are deprived of the privilege to be in the state of being Muḥrim, and of its relative recitation

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1. Al-Ḥurr Āmilī, Vasā'il al-Shīa, Vol. 9, p. 67
2. The Threshold of the Lord of Glory. M.S.

of the Labbaīk. Therefore, the secure and "secluded" Divine Precinct of the Lord is inaccessible to any non-Muslim.

THE AWE AND REVERENCE OF THE SACRED MOSQUE

Because of the awe-inspiring, majestic grandeur of the House of Allāh (the Ka'ba) and also because the Ka'ba is the center of gravity and "focal point" of the entire Sacred Mosque, the Ḥaram draws the pilgrim from every direction, powerless into its orbits, inspiring rare and spontaneous reverence: "***And Whoever doth intend to wrong unjustly therein [Masjid al-Ḥaram], we will cause to taste a most grievous chastisement.***"[1] According to exegetes, any deliberate sin of any kind in the precinct of the Ḥaram is considered an act of profanity. In fact, even deliberately bothering an attendant will cause God's wrath and His subsequent punishment.

In a Rawāyat (verbatim) the Holy Imām as-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.), stated dislike for a prolonged sojourn in the Holy Precinct, because staying permanently therein may cause him to fall short in his devotional practices performed in the divine Territory of God the High[2].

Therefore, Allāh's pilgrim must be mindful of his or her own deeds, behavior and language so that they may not be disrespectful to the House of the Adored Beloved, and will not deprive him or herself from the bountiful Blessings of God the High.

THE MIQĀT

The first location on the border of the Ḥaram (Sacred Circumscribed Zone) is called the Miqāt. It is a place where the pilgrim commences the Ḥajj by putting on the garb of Iḥrām and abandoning all ungodly possessions, dependencies and vicissitudes.

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 22 Al- Ḥajj (The Pilgrimage), 25.

[2] Kāfi, vol. 8, p. 86.

Every person in love has an appointed place of Appointment with the Beloved. The Miqāt is the place where the Apostles of God, the Holy Imāms and Confidants of God, wrapped their bodies with the garb of Iḥrām. The Miqāt is the starting point to enter the High Divine Court of God; it is the gateway to cross into the Vicinity of All-Glorious God.

All Muslims, coming from every direction to proceed toward the Ka'bah must first "prepare" themselves in the Miqāt and then enter, converging in the Sacred Territory of God wherein all the Ḥajj's rituals unfold.

There are five Miqāts around the Sacred Circumscribed Zone, as described below:

1. The Miqāt for the people from Madīnah: is the Shajarah Mosque, situated 12 kilometers from the city of Madīnah, and 480 kilometers from the city of Makkah. It is also known as "'Alī's ba'sar" ('Alī's Blister)[1] and "Zul Halefah". According to Rawāyats, all the Fourteen Innocents[2] have done their Iḥrām on in this blessed Mosque.

2. The Miqāt for the People from Syria: is the Johfeh's Mosque which is 156 kilometers from the City of Makkah. It is blessed by Imām 'Alī's footsteps (May the Infinite Allāh's Blessing Be upon Him.)

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1. It is called so because after the prophet departed Makkah for Madīnah, Imām Ali (s.m.a.) arrived from Makkah to join the Prophet (s.w.a.) in this location, near Madīnah about few days later, according to some Rawāiah. He walked from Makkah to this location (little more than four hundred kilometers), wearing out his shoes; thus the sharp volcanic debris in the desert caused blisters on his blessed feet. For more details refer to history. M.S.
2. The Prophet Muḥammad (s.w.a.), Imām Ali (s.m.a.), Fatimah az-Zahra, and all the Imāms (s.m.a.). M.S.

3. The Miqāt for the people of Tāe`f: located in a territory called Qarn al-Manāzil, 94 kilometers west of the Exalted City of Makkah.

4. The Miqāt for the people coming from the direction of Yemen: called Yalmam, 84 kilometers southwest of the Exalted City of Makkah.

5. The Miqāt for the people coming from the direction of Iraq: in Vādi al Aqiq, 94 kilometers from the Exalted City of Makkah.

IḤRĀM

To become Muḥrim means to divest from all usual, attention-grabbing clothing, and cover the body instead with an unnoticeable garb (Iḥrām) that is without a name or sign.

> "***And [cover your body] with the raiment of piety, that is the best.***"[1]

In the previously expressed dialogue between the Holy Imām as Sajjād (s.m.a.) and Shiblī, concerning the secrets of Ḥajj, His Holiness inquired of Shiblī: "When you became Muḥrim and wrapped yourself with the garb of Iḥrām, was it your intention that everything God prohibited you also prohibit to yourself, and refrain from?" This statement alludes precisely to our topic. Iḥrām must be accompanied with the raiment of piety and obedience to God, and stripping oneself of one's usual clothing implies removing oneself from all corrupt desires and disobediences. Everything that is not God's Will (and His Divine Unity), the pilgrim must consider unlawful and inadmissible to oneself, and must "dissociate" oneself from it and from all its implications, completely.

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 7 al-Ar'āf (The Elevated Places), 26.

TALBĪAH[1]

During the Pre-Islamic era, the Era of Ignorance, the slogan of Talbiah was:

"There I am for you, there I am for you, who do not have associates, except the one who is for you."[2] The Prophet abjured this misleading slogan with this statement (from the Ḥadīth and Verbatim): *"Take [learn] from me your devotional rituals [of the Ḥajj]."* Thus the Labbaīk has been transformed into the pure Form of Tawhīd (Unity of God). Now, the motif and recitation of the Labbaīk, made with the garb of Iḥrām on, is as such:

> ***"Labbaīk, Allāhumma Labbaīk, Labbaīka la sharika laka` Labbaīk, inn al-Hamd wan-ni`mata laka` wal Mulk, la sharika laka Labbaīk."***

In translation:

> ***"Yes! Here I am, here I am O' My Lord! With absolute zest and ardor I am compliant with Your Call upon me. Yes! I came to Your Call. And [I do believe] there is no associate for You and likeness with You. I, with exultation and Love answer Your Call. The Praise and (unbounded) Bounties belong to You only. Verily You govern only and there is no one as Your associate and of Your similitude. Yes! I came in compliance with Your Call."***

To clarify the Talbiah stage of the Ḥajj, it is suitable to outline, briefly, some notions related to Labbaīk, focusing on its authentic Godly mysticism (Irfān). Malik Ibn Uns thus narrates a revealing story:

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[1] The recitation of the motif of Labbaīk. M.S.

[2] Kulaīnī, Kāfī, vol.4, p. 542.

> "One year, during the journey of the Ḥajj I was in the company of His Holiness Imām as-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.). Everyone arrived in the Miqāt, wearing Iḥrām and continually reciting the Labbaīk. In the crowd, I spotted the Holy Imām as-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.). I saw His Holiness falling into profound thought and was in a state of disquiet. Each time His Holiness would even attempt to recite the Labbaīk, he was shaken as in an ague, seized by uncontrollable weeping and voice choked with deep commotion; the sob blocked his air passageway, making him lose nearly all control; the situation was so intense I dreaded he would fall from his mount. Cautiously, I stepped forward, approached him closer, and suggested, 'O' son of the Prophet of God! There is no choice; in any way you could, recite this invocation (Labbaīk).'

His Holiness replied in a broken voice, *'O' son of Abi Amer! How would I dare? How can I recite the Labbaīk with any audacity? Reciting the Labbaīk means: 'O' my dear Lord! I am at once subservient to what You call me for, and I am under Your absolute injunctions and commandments.' How can I ascertain and indulge this claim with temerity to my Lord, declaring myself, presenting myself totally and promptly ready at His Service? If in reply I am told,* ***'We do accept you not'****, then what? What can I do?....'"*[1]

WILĀYAT AND (RECITATION OF LABBAĪK) TALBIAH

There is no other Call from God more crucial than the Call to Wilāyat and Imāmate. There is no Call higher in degree than the Call for Wilāyat upon mankind.

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[1] Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, Bihār al- Anwār, vol.11, p. 109.

Because the absolute Master (Valī[1]) is the Perfect Man to follow who is, per se, the ever-complete Reflection of All-Mighty God. Nearness to the Valī, is the sublime ultimate goal of every human being whose heart is in love. It is for the Absolute Valī to resuscitate the true and original Islam. Certainly, it is the positive reply to his Call that prepares Human Condition for the divine Reappearance (Parousia) of this momentous Man who will lead all of humanity in every aspect of life to the Divine Court of God the High. The pilgrim who does not believe in the Beloved Infallible Imām (Valī), not only will his or her prayers and invocations to the Lord not heal his or her pain, but much worse, will be affected by God's Wrath and repulsion that has a noxious moral effect. According to Imām al-Bāqir (s.m.a.)[2], "*[These] multitudes of people you see reciting the Labbaīk, by Allāh! Their screams of prayer are more abhorring than the ugly sound of the 'four-footed' (without brain and intelligence).*"[3]

Indeed, how is it possible that someone claim to be cleansed of his or her ungodliness and transgressions but does not recognize nor perceive the divine medium to God's limitless Grace?

The devoted pilgrim of the House of God must recite the motif of the Labbaīk with ardent love and faith in the Wilāyat, because the sacrosanct land of Makkah is the land suffused by the Rank of Wilāyat and the Qur'ān together. These two Pillars of Islam are complementarily

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1. Walī literally means, Master, Lord, Friend of All Mighty God, the Guardian and Preserver of the Religion of God. M.S.
2. Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ali, known as al-Bāqir (s.w.a.). Born in Madīnah in 57 A.H./676 A.D. The date of His martyrdom occurred in the same City varies from 114 A.H/732 A.D. to 126 A.H/743 A.H. M.S.
3. Vāfi, the Section of Ta'zīm Al Khādim min al Ḥajj.

connected. For, his Holiness the last Messenger of God said: "*Today I have completed for you all your Religion. My divine blessings upon you all. I feel satisfied (by the fact that) Islam will be the Religion for you all*".[1] This is original Islam, which includes its two main Foundational Precepts, Wilāyat and the Qur'ān, as exactly the Prophet of God (s.w.a.) was duly commissioned by God to elucidate. For, his Holiness the last Prophet of God (s.w.a.) also stated: "*I will depart from amongst you all (depart for the eternal world) while I leave behind two weighty and precious things: one is the Book of God, and the other, my progenies* ('Itrat)".[2] Proving this concept is the fact that the prayers and rituals of those very deniers of the Wilāyat are neither accepted by God, nor—to their greater detriment—is their basic, verbal, outward profession of being Muslim in the specific sentence "LA ELA HA ELLA ALLĀH."

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 5 al-Mā'idah, 5.

[2] Mirzā Ḥusaīn Nūrī Ṭabarsī, Mustadrak al Vasā'il, vol.3, p. 355.

KA’BA

Ka’ba is a House in cubic form built with simple stones laid side by side, and coursed ashlars. This House is the exact homologous of the “House Visited” in Heaven, Baīt al Ma`mūr, which is, like the Ka’ba, situated in front of the Lord’s Imperial Throne of Glory.

His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) states: “The Religion will be solid and firm until Ka’ba is solid and firm”.[1] The Wilāyat and Ka’ba are as inseparable as the way Ka’ba and the Religion are. It is mentioned in the Saqleyn Verbatim that the Holy Prophet (s.w.a.) states: “*Qur’ān and Wilāyat are interconnected until the Day of Judgment when they will meet me by the Fountain of Kowsar in paradise.*”[2] Hence, all the components and precepts of the Religion are interconnected. Whoever accepts some of those precepts and denies other ones is a Hypocrite who does not belong to those who believe. Qur'ān condemns severely those who believe in some precepts and deny other: "***Verily those who deny God and His apostles and desire that they differentiate (in authority) between God and His apostles and say "We believe in some and we deny some", intend they to take between*** (this and) ***that*** (a midway),[1] for not getting in embroilment with people. This is also a psychological disease. ***These are they the infidels truly, and We*** (We = God) ***have prepared for the infidels a disgraceful torment***."[2]

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[1] Al- Hurr Āmilī, Muḥammad Ḥasan. Vasā’il Al-Shīa , Vol.8, p. 14, referred by Sadduq, Muḥammad “Man la Yahzar al-Faghiah, Vol.1, p. 87.

[2] More than eighty companions of the Prophet (s.w.a.) have narrated this Verbatim, confirmed by all the Ulamās.

THE PURPOSE OF THE KA'BA'S CONSTRUCTION

Before the Creation of Man, Angels, in a dialogue with All-Glorious God, did not believe in the high rank of Man as vicar of God on earth.[3] They did not believe because they were unaware of the extraordinary rank of Man. Once God the Glorious let the Angels know that this Man possesses the ability to reach the rank of being God's vicegerent,[4] they then initiated their angelic preparation for repentance.[5] To recompense for their lame claim, they needed a place to better worship, glorify, eulogize and praise God the High. For this reason, an Angel was assigned to lay the foundation of Baīt al Ma'mūr (the Visited House) in front of God's Throne. Then, as a token of repentance for their error, the Angels began circumambulating around the Visited House, falling in reverential prostration and devotional prayers with ascription of praise and glory to God in this Heavenly Dwelling.

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[1] Qur'ān, Şūrah 4, al-Nisā (The Women), 150.

[2] Qur'ān, Şūrah 4 al-Nisā (The Women), 151.

[3] Qur'ān, Şūrah 2 al-Baqarah (The Heifer), 30.

[4] Qur'ān, Şūrah 2 al-Baqarah (The Heifer), 30.

[5] Qur'ān, Şūrah 2 al-Baqarah (The Heifer), 31.

The edifice of the Ka'ba on earth[1] is for Man to circumambulate around—in the blessed Presence[2] of God's Vicegerent the Holy Imām-i Zamān—to compensate for past negligence and short-doings; to remedy rage, transgression and, especially, our obliviousness to his extraordinary position bestowed by God. Therefore, those who circumambulate around the Ka'ba should have recovered from heedless deeds, and gained understanding after having ignored his or her true Self, and, above all, have spiritually perceived the authentic wisdom regarding the Perfect Man, Eternal Vicegerent of God on earth, His Holiness the Supreme Remnant of Allāh (may the infinite blessing and peace of God be upon him and may God hasten his sublime re-Appearance[3]), and to have "returned" to God. Therefore, one must hope that Merciful God may accept, like He did of the Angels in Heaven[4], the respective pilgrim's circumambulation (Ṭawāf) here on earth. Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) was once asked why the Ka'ba was named thus.

> "*Because the Ka'ba,*" His Holiness expounded, "*is in cubic form (Mo-kaa`b), therefore it is called Ka'ba." Then His Holiness continued, "The meaning of the Ka'ba having four walls and four corners is that Baīt al Ma`mūr in heaven has four walls and four corners as well. Baīt al Ma'mūr has four sides because the High Throne of God (Arsh) has four sides. The High, Royal Throne of God has four sides due to the*

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[1] Whatever exists on earth has its similitude in heaven. According to the tradition from Imām as-Sādeq (s.m.a.)M.S.

[2] In the sense of Presentia Realis as well as Presentia Spiritualis. M.S.

[3] Re-Appearance, or, more precisely in Latin terms, Parausia, Return. M.S.

[4] In the sense of a symmetric, "synchronic" Tawāf of Angels around the Bait-al-Ma'mūr in heaven and of Man around Ka'ba' on earth. M.S.

*Divine Wisdom supported by four sentences: **ṢUBḤĀNALLĀH, ALHAMDULILLAH, LA ILAHA ILLA ALLĀH, and ALLĀH-U AKBAR.**"*[1]

KA'ABA OR THE ANCIENT HOUSE

The Lord has thus commanded to the Prophet Abraham (s.m.a.) to call upon everyone: "***And they [people] must perform Ṭawāf around the Ancient House***".[2] And in another blessed Āyah: "***Then the location*** [of the sacrificial slaughter] ***and other devotional rituals of Ḥajj is the Ḥaram and the Ancient House***".[3] This divine House neither, by itself, belongs to anything ungodly nor tolerates polytheism of those who circumambulate around it.

This House is the Ancient House, Noble and Free.[4] It teaches humanity the lessons of Nobility and supreme "freedom". This is a divinely blissful and "magnetic" Center that pulls overawed worshipers to itself; it was built and worshiped in the time of pre-existence, four thousand years before the Fall of his Holiness Adam (s.m.a) on this earth. "***Verily, this is the First House built for Mankind in Bakkah*** [*the place of throngs of people*], ***blessed and*** [*granting*] ***guidance for*** [*all the creatures of*] ***the worlds.***"[5] This House from the time of pre-existence is for everyone; it is not exclusive to a specific group, tribe, nation or culture. According to this Āyah, Ka'ba is the House that guides everyone.

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[1] Ṣadūq, Man la Yaḥzar al Faqīh, Vol. 2, p. 124, Section 2, reference no. 540.

Subhanallah (Celestial-Glorious is God), Al-Hamdo le-llāh (Praised be God only), La Elaha' ella Allah (There is no god but God) and Allah –o Akbar (God is Great); they are the recurrent Dhekr (inner re-memoration) as well. M.S.

[2] Qur'ān Ṣūrah 22 Ḥajj, 29.

[3] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 22 Ḥajj, 3.

[4] In Latin, Obsous, literally "free of", and in general terms, absolutely free of everything. M.S.

[5] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 Al-i Imrān (The Family of Imran), 96.

KA'BA AND THE PEOPLE

The Ka'ba and the masses are highly interconnected. The divine Book clearly states: "***God hath made the Ka'ba, the sacred House, a Sanctuary*** [*a place to rise up in revolt*] ***for mankind.***"[1] God the Glorious has made this revered House so that it impels mankind to revolt. In truth, any revolt requires a suitable place and a truthful leader (Ṣadiq). The revered Ka'ba, per se, is the highest place and rank for the revolt of the highest and most Perfect Man—that is, the Re-appearance of Imām-i Zamān, The Guardian of Time (May our life be his ransom).

The point should be noted is: God the High, from the time immemorial has thus spoken to Abraham and Ismā'īl (s.m.a.)—who were two Perfect Men: "***And We covenanted with Abraham and Ishmael*** [*saying to them*]: '***Purify you two My House for those who perform Ṭawāf and abide*** [*only*] ***in devotion*** [*and prayer*], [*for those who*] ***bow down and prostrate*** [*worshiping*]'".[2] Certainly, this "purity" refers to the "external purification",[3] and at times implies the "inner purification", and the Sacred House of God be free of all "contaMinations" of any kind of idol. Certainly, whoever stays and remains on the direction and guidelines of the Prophets of God spontaneously feels the responsibility to consider Ka'ba as the most suitable abode with his or her God the High.

Needless to say: the evils are not standing still. They, moment by moment, are in continuous effort to "contaminate" the sacred House of Allāh. Despite the fact that "after" Abraham and Ishmael fulfilled God's

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 5 al-Mā'idah (The Repast), 97.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah (The Heifer), 125.
3. Such as clean body and clean clothes etc. M.S.

injunctions to build His only House, this same House was tainted by numerous and senseless idols. So much we know that at the time of rising Islam, the House of Allāh and the entire area of the sacred Mosque was filled with idols such as Lāt, Hobal, Ozzā etc. Yet the Grand Prophet, the last Prophet of God, the Seal of Prophets (s.w.a.), after the Conquest of Makkah in 10 Ḥijrah, with the assistance of the Master of Masters Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) had destroyed with an axe all the 360 idols in and around the House of God. The Ka'ba again was free from the contaMination of idols. Now is the time that the Awaited Imām, the Awaited Messiah (s.m.a.) with his divine Revolt, liberate and cleanse the Ka'ba from the hidden and non-hidden idols the way Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) did.

O' you too, Man, in these days and nights, be vigilant and sagacious to cleanse your soul and your body with pure, absolute Tawhīd and set aside everything and everybody except Tawhīd —so that the universal condition be ready for his Reappearance.

The one who has only outward spiritual connection with Ka'ba is not at the same level as the inner spiritual relationship that one has with the Ka'ba. The one who apparently liberates Ka'ba from the idols is far away from the one who inwardly cleanses the Ka'ba from the hidden polytheism which vilifies the human spirit. Their difference is as great as the contrast between the Ḥajj Asghar and the Ḥajj Akbar.[1]

God Himself cites clearly in the Qur'ān: "***What! Make you the giving of drink to the pilgrims and maintenance of the Sacred Mosque, equal to the one who believeth in God and the Last Day,*** [*of requital*] ***and striveth***

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[1] The coinciding of the day of Arafah (the descent of forgiveness from heaven upon those present in the land of Arafāt) with a Friday (which is the holy day of week). It happens every 9 years. In Ḥajj-e Akbar it is believed His Holiness the Awaited Imām will Re-appear. In Ḥajj-I Asghar, the day of Arafah does not coincide with Friday. M.S.

in God's path? They are not equal in God's view'.[1] It is precisely with this blessed Āyah one can see that the self-proclaimed chief of pilgrims is not equal to the true everlasting Commander-in-Chief of all pilgrims. Furthermore, in another blessed Āyah the All-glorious God states: "***Those who believed and migrated and strove in God's Path with their properties and their selves are the highest in rank in God's view; and they are the achievers of salvation.***"[2] Therefore one must willingly "migrate" with all the wealth from oneself and strive on the path of God the most High.

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 10 Yunus, 19.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 10 Yunus, 20.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE KA’BA

Ka’ba was found four thousand years before the Fall of Adam (s.m.a.) on this earth. It passes eight thousand years from the Fall of Adam (s.m.a.). Therefore, Ka’ba is twelve thousand years old.

“***Verily, the First House built for mankind is at Bakka’*** [*the place of gathering of people*]; ***Blessed and a Guidance for the worlds***”.[1] This House is for everyone. It does not belong to a particular tribe, culture. According to this Āyah, Ka’ba belongs to people and guides everyone.

By God’s command, this imposing Grand House was rebuilt by the hands of two of the Lord’s glorious Prophets, Abraham, the intimate friend of Allāh,[2] and Ismā’īl (s.m.a.). The Godly pure intention and good-heartedness of its builders is clearly and uniquely manifest. God the All-Merciful states in the Qur’ān:

> “[*O’ Messenger! Remind people of*] ***when Abraham and Ismā’īl raised the foundation of the Ka’ba*** [*and invoking God said*] ***O’ Lord accept*** [*this service*] ***from us; Verily Thou and***

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[1] Qur’ān, Şūrah 3 Āl-i Imrān (The Family of Imrān), 96.

[2] The Qur’ānic title for the prophet Abraham (s.m.a). M.S.

Thou [*alone*] ***art the All-Hearing*** [*of the people 's prayers*] ***and All-Knowing*** [*of their innermost secrets*]."[1]

According to this glorious Āyah, the two magnanimous men of God, at the pinnacle of their profound faith in Tawhīd (the Oneness of God), "perceived" the Sublime attributes of God and therefore, worshipped Him with His Own Magnificent Attributes, the Ultimate Realityof worship. Furthermore, these two Messengers of God the High after finishing the construction of the Ka'ba with devout and sincere intention, and with awe and hope, in private prayed to their Lord (Niāyesh).[2] May their inward litany be in the Lord's full view and be accepted by Him. Amen.

THE PERMANENT CONNECTION (NEXUS) OF THE RITUALS OF ḤAJJ WITH THE RANK OF WILĀYAT

The Ḥajj and its rituals are so infused into the supreme Rank of Wilāyat that the prolific exegesist of the Sunni School of thought, Abū Ḥanīfah Na'man Ibn-i Thābit stated: "If it was not for Muḥammad ibn Ja'far (s.m.a.)[3], the people would not even know what the Ḥajj rituals all are about."[4] Countless Rawāyahs narrated by the Holy Imām as-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) confirm this statement, and countless volumes have been written about them.

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah (The Heifer), 127.
2. Niāyish, in Persian means the inward, intimate, repentant dialogue with Glorious God; sometimes in a soft , melodious voice, at other times making one tremble and or weep, grasped by extreme emotion. Nīāyish is usually done in nocturnal seclusion. M.S.
3. The sixth Imām (s.m.a.).M.S.
4. Ṣadūq, Man lā Yaḥzar al Faghīh, vol.. 1, section of Navādir al-Ḥajj.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN EACH STONE OF THE KA'BA AND THE WILĀYAT

Every single stone of the Ka'ba relates to the Wilāyat, but where is the eye that truthfully "sees" this divine secret of Ḥajj? His Holiness Imām Bāqir (s.m.a) states: "*The people are ordained toward these stones* (of the Ka'ba), *perform Ṭawāf around them, and then come to us to profess their faith in Wilāyat and express their readiness to assist us*".[1] If there were eyes and ears to see and to hear, they would have to "see" and "hear" that each single stone of this Blessed House calls upon humanity for the rank of Wilāyat. I do not want go into the discussion that we consider these stones soulless, dead, and quiet. Wilāyat (Mastership) is the spiritual and amorous union with the Holy Valī.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN KA'BA AND WILĀYAT

In every step of this writing it can be seen the footsteps of the statement that Wilāyat posses an unbreakable connection with each single ritual of the Ḥajj. Therefore Ka'ba also has its unbreakable connection with Wilāyat.

In the same reciprocal way that the Ḥajj is connected with the Wilāyat, Ka'ba and Wilāyat are also unbreakably connected. Here we will briefly cite a few aspects of this connection so that the dear reader could imagine it in mind and soul.

1. Without doubt, the Divine Grace and Might of God safeguarded the Ka'ba from harm attempted by the formidable military attack initiated from the Governor of Abyssinia, Abraha Ashram, and

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[1] Kulaīnī, Uṣūl al-kāfī Vol.4, 549.

the "elephant's folk," those henchmen who were following a great elephant. Glorious God Himself is the Preserver of His own Sacred House. At the time when Islam was first rising, people had built about ten different Ka'bas in different regions to challenge the Sacred Mosque. After dominating Yemen, Abraha Ashra`m marched with determination from Abyssinia into the Arabian Peninsula, intending to utterly annihilate the Ka'ba and make his church flourish instead.

In the "Year of Elephant" (570 C.E.), which coincided with the birth of the Messenger of Allāh, Abraha invaded Makkah with a mighty army. Abraha thought that the guardian of the city of Makkah (who was 'Abd-ul Muṭṭalib, God's representative on earth at that time), would block him from attacking Makkah, the Ka'ba also. Contrary of what he had believed, when 'Abd-ul Muṭṭalib faced Abraha, 'Abd-ul Muṭṭalib inquired about the camels that his soldiers had confiscated. Abraha, in surprise asked him "I thought that you are here to save the Ka'ba and your city, but instead I see you are concerned about your camels. Do you have anything to say about this House? If you had chosen to be an intermediate for negotiations, I would not have attacked it and would have saved it from destruction." 'Abd-ul Muṭṭalib said, "Certainly that House has an Owner Who will prevent the enemy to do so." Abraha dared to attack Ka'ba. We see the result of that attack in the āyah of Qur'ān: "*[O' Messenger of God!]* ***Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the fellows of Elephant? Didst He not make their treacherous plan*** *[to destroy Ka'ba]* ***go astray? And did He not send down upon them birds in flocks, pelting them with stones of backed clay, and then rendered their bodies like***

straw, chewed up under the cattle's teeth?"[1] Thus, the Lord is the Protector, Guardian and Tutor of the House of Ka'ba. We can see how the Divine Wilāyat was implemented on Abraha's powerful army-invader.

2. In the Qur'ān, God the High reveals the eternal inner fusion of the Wilāyat and Ka'ba: "***Swear I doth by this City*** [*Makkah*], [*as therein*] ***you*** [*O' Our Apostle Muḥammad*] ***inhabit.***"[2]
   The Lord swears by the city of Makkah, because the Apostle of God, the Leader of Islam lives therein. Otherwise Makkah, without the ever-blessed Presence of the Messenger of God (May the infinite blessing and peace of God be upon him) is like any other city.
3. About twenty years before the Ḥijrah, on the thirteenth day of the month of Rajab, the most extraordinary epoch-making event, in relation to the Ka'ba, occurred. The event was the auspicious birth of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) inside this very same House of God. By virtue of his birth in the very essence of the Ka'ba itself, the authentic inaugural Truth of Wilāyat appeared on earth. This supreme Divine Wilāyat of Imām-i Zamān originated from the echo of that "Illuminating Appearance".
4. Four years passed from the event that occurred in Karbala. 'Abdullāh Ibn Zubaīr always aimed to rise to power and for years nurtured the love to command until the year sixty-four of Ḥijrah, 'Abdullāh Ibn Zubaīr seized the political opportunity and started his own military uprising. He established his government in Makkah. Yazid immediately ordered the Syrian army to crush

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1. Qur'ān, Şūrah 105 al-Fil (The Elephant), 1 - 5.
2. Qur'ān, Şūrah al-Balad (The City) 90, 1.

the revolt. En route to Makkah, it ravaged the city of Madīnah and then attacked the city of Makkah with stones and fire flung from catapults. In this all-out assault, the Ka'ba itself was greatly damaged; the cover over the edifice of the Ka'ba burned in flames. The Ka'ba itself crumbled down. Yazid, the disbelieving tyrant ruler-Caliph of the time who was residing in Syria, finally died. His army retreated back to Syria.

5. And again, in the year 73 of Ḥijrah, Hijāj Ibn Yūsuf Saqafī sparked his own uprising when he brutally attacked the city of Makkah. Ibn Zubaīr, in retreat, took asylum in the safety and security of Ka'ba. The ruler of that time, by the hand of his chief military officer, Hijaj Ibn Yūsuf Saqafi attacked the Ka'ba with catapults and destroyed the place of Ibn Zubaīr's refuge, and arrested then killed him. The question is, why then the Owner of this House did not intervene and did not ratify His Divine Sanction to protect the Ka'ba? The attacker maintained the relentless assault, pressing until the Qiblah's location was destroyed, the space of circumambulation around the Ka'ba was annihilated, the Ḥajar al-Aswad was disposed of, and the stone walls and the four corners collapsed. Why then the All-Mighty Guardian of His own Ka'ba did nothing against all of this? Our only answer to this topic is that anytime Ka'ba stays in the direction of the rank of Wilāyat, the Lord Himself keeps every evil away from the Ka'ba and safeguard it. If the Ka'ba becomes a tool for evil deeds, the evil doers themselves will burn right at the proximity of the Ka'ba and no protection will come from God. [1] In response to this difficult topic, his Excellency the late Muḥsin Fayḍ-i Kāshānī (may Allāh's

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[1] Yūsuf Saghafī in that uprising burned in flames. M.S.

> Mercy be upon him) said: "In his time, Ibn Zubaīr was against the Wilāyat and against the Imām, who was at the time The Holy Imām as-Sajjād (s.m.a.). God the All-High demonstrated to people that he would not protect Ibne Zubaīr, though he was revolting against the tyrant of the time, because Ibne Zubaīr was against the Wilāyaṭ and against the Imamate.[1] God showed people that He will not protect him even when he takes refuge in the Ka'ba; even then he certainly will not be under the Lord's Mercy and protection."

It should not be omitted a part of the intense speech of the Holy Imām as Sajjād (s.m.a.)[2] to Yazid in Damascus when his Holiness in protest and in crucible suffering, said: "*It is I the son of Makkah and Minā; it is I the Son of [the Fountain] Zamzam and [Mount of] Ṣafā.*" Indeed, the one who is the true offspring of Celestial holiness, per se, is the guardian of the very essence and soul of the Ka'ba and he is the Ever–living Imām through time and ages, and the Perfect living Man of All-Glorious God.

DIFFERENT GRADES OF GAZING AT THE KA'BA

His Holiness Imām as-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) thus reported: "*[Even] only looking at the Ka'ba is an act of worshipping [God].*"[3] Without a doubt, observing the Ka'ba, per se, is a "form" of prayer; and its relative spiritual

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1. Imamate means Divine Guidance. M.S.
2. Which took place post eventum in the sumptuous Caliphal Palace of Yazīd immediately after the event in Karbala in the year 61 of Ḥijrah/2 October 680 A.D. Imām as-Sajjād (s.m.a) was the only male from the holy behest of the Prophet (s.w.a) who survived the killing. M.S.
3. Kafī, Vol.12, p. 30. Kāfī, the Chapter of the "Spiritual Rewards of Meditating at the Ka'ba, Vol.4, p. 239.

attainment has been elucidated. Gazing at the Ka'ba meditatively never has and never will occur at the same level of perception by everyone, as it is the Word of Tawhīd (the Divine Unity, the Oneness of Allāh, I bear witness that there is no god but God which is the safe Fortress of the Soul, a refuge to God. However, the above is contingent on one's belief in the Divine Assignment of Wilāyat, as entrusted by God. As it has been connoted by the Holy Imām 'Alī ar-Rezā[1] (s.m.a.) in the much celebrated Ḥadīth of Silsilat al Dhahab: "*[Bearing witness that] there is no god but God, is the Safe Fortress of Allāh the High, and whosoever enters therein will be sheltered and safe [from the dangers and aberrations of this world] if its condition is fulfilled, and the condition is I.*" This means that the Rank of Imāmhood and Supreme Divine Wilāyat is the Prerequisite to enter and reside in this unshakably solid Godly Fortress. If this condition is not fulfilled, the Godly Fortress is utterly inaccessible. Or, at the least, one's claim of being a Muslim is false.

Though the Holy Eighth Imām 'Alī ar-Rezā (s.m.a.) declared to be the Condition to enter this Refuge/Fortress, it is not therefore available exclusively to his magnanimous soul. The purpose of his declaration is the uninterrupted Imāmate and Wilāyat as a whole. The Imām 'Alī ar-Riḍā's verbatim is as the same as the Messenger of Allāh's: "*I am the City of Knowledge and 'Alī is its Gate.*" This apostolic statement does not refer exclusively to Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), but is inclusive of the Divine Rank of the Imāmate and Wilāyat. In fact we read in the Duā of Jama' al-Kabīrah or the one from the Imām Hādī (s.m.a.) that "being the Gate toward Allāh and being the recipient of the divine Knowledge belongs to all the Immaculate Holy Imāms (s.m.a.).[1] Therefore, the perception of the Ka'ba received at a glance depends solely upon the comprehension of the Rank of Wilāyat and Imāmhood, which lead to the forgiveness, mercy, and alleviation of vicissitudes and sorrow in this world and the one, much worse of the trial of the Judgment Day. His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) also discloses this truth as well, saying: "*Whoever contemplates the Ka'ba with the intimate understanding and gnosis ('Perceptional Knowledge') of our[2] (Ahl al-Baīt) Truth, and of our veneration, he/she is re-cognizing the Truth and veneration of the Ka'ba. This way, Lord pardons his/her sins. And this suffices him/her in this world and for the trial of the Judgment Day.*"[3]

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[1] Abūl-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Mūsā famed as ar-Reẓā was born in Madīnah in 148 / 765. His Martyrdom occurred in 203 /818 in Tus Mashhad (the place of Martyrdom). M.S.

This passage should lend greater clarity to the meaning of a particular Ḥadīth , which explains why the land of Makkah, by itself, is charming and lovable; everything therein has that celestial atmosphere (such as the very soil of Makkah, every single pebble, and tree, and herb and water ....), just being present in this Holy Land is a form of prayer; even "resting" our gaze on the Ka'ba is a form of prayer, given the completed Prerequisite of Cognition, the mystical understanding of the very essence of Wilāyat, and given that the uplifting, Awakening effect of this Cognition has been interiorized in the human soul.

For example, "seeing" Imām 'Alī and Ahl al-Baīt, who are, per se, the divine Manifestation of the very essence-truth of Wilāyat, depends on one condition: the mystical aptitude of perception and knowledge of these holy Beloveds of God. There have been people who saw them,

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1. Muḥaddis Qumī, Shaīkh 'Abbās. Mafātīh al-Janān. Duā of Jāmah al-Kabīrah.
2. The Imām (s.m.a.) speaking in the plural, connotes the theophanic investiture of all Imāms (s.m.a.).M.S.
3. Kāfī, Chapter of Faḍl An-naẓar Ilal Ka`ba, Vol. 4

lived with them, interacted with them, or they had the opportunity to visit them as pilgrims to their graves. However, they did not perceive their sacrosanct presence in their heart and soul. Therefore, not only did these individuals not attain any spiritual benefit and succor from these unfathomable divine Recipients of excellence and intercession to All-merciful God, they received rapprochement from them, which had a pejorative effect. This is because Ahl al-Baīt and Qur'ān are one and the same: "***And we sent down*** [*revealed stage by stage*] ***the Qur'ān, which is a healing and Mercy unto the believers, but it adds not to the unjust but perdition*** [*and loss*]."[1] Therefore, it is incumbent on us that in our inmost and profound Self we prepare ourselves and our modus essendi to gain the bountiful benefit from these Supreme Āyāt[2] of the all-Glorious God.

We bring a confirmed Rawāyah from the Holy Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.): "God enhanced the Ka'ba and the surrounding areas with 120 divine Blessings: 60 of them are upon the pilgrims circumambulating around it, 40 of them for those who perform Ṣalāt there and 20 for those who just look at the Ka'ba."[3]

THE PROPHET'S ṬAWĀF AROUND THE HOUSE OF KA'BA

The grand traditionalist and Expert of Ḥadīth, Kulaīnī (Allāh's blessings upon him) reports:

> "Ābān Ibn Thaghlab – who was one of the greatest exegetes and prominent aids to His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.)

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 17 al-Isrā (The Night Journey), 82
2. In this context, Āyah (lit. the Signs of God) refers to Qur'ānic verses as well as to the Holy Imāms (s.w.a.) as the Signs (theophanic manifestation) of God the All-High. M.S.
3. Kulaīnī, Muḥammad Ibn Ya'qūb, the book of al-Kāfī, Vol.4, p. 428, section H.

> asked the Imām, 'Do we know of any specific circumambulation performed personally by the Prophet of God?' His Holiness informed in reply: '*The Prophet's Ṭawāf consisted of ten Ṭawāf s per day, and each Ṭawāf was comprised of seven circuits around the Ka'ba; three Ṭawāf s at the beginning of the evening; three Ṭawāf s at the end of evening; two Ṭawāf in the morning; two Ṭawāf s in the afternoon.*'"[1]

Therefore, it pleases God the All-High that the pilgrim, after the end of the Umrah (Lesser Ḥajj) rituals or at the end of the Grand Ḥajj, follows this enchanting prophet-like conduct, obtaining twice as much spiritual attainment and grace.

No doubt, all the pilgrims of the House of God do not have the same degree and aptitude of perceptual understanding and spiritual progress. Using the Rawāyat and several other statements of the Infallible Imāms (s.w.a.) which we cannot indulge here, it can be deduced that the pilgrims of House of God are distinguishable in four different stages, or levels of Spirituality:

1. Some pilgrims just walk around this Ka'ba built from stones, and except the edifice of the Ka'ba, they do not "see" anything or "anybody" else.
2. Others have passed this stage and reached the World of Mithāl.[2]

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[1] Kāfī, Vol. 4, p. 428, Section 5.

[2] Mithāl: the intermediate World (in Latin, Mundus Imajinalis) between the sensory world and the world of the supersensible, the world of Angels. It is the intermediate realm of "subtle bodies" perceptible by the organ of Cognitive faculty and spiritual perception. M.S.

They perform their prayers fearing the Inferno or longing for Paradise. For this reason, they have been invited to the House of God.[1]

3. A selected few are admitted to the High Court of God in Heaven, such as Hārith Ibn Zaīd, who, so absorbed in rapt amazement, once said: "*It is as if I am clearly contemplating the High Throne of the Merciful God.*" These are the people of Certitude, who sought and obtained perceiving eyes, an enlightened heart, and listening ears.
4. The Ones who extraordinarily achieve the highest Level of Proximity to God the High are only the Immaculate Imāms, who belong exclusively to the Immaculate Behest ('Itrat) of the Prophet (May the infinite Blessing of Allāh be upon them). The very soul of the Ka'ba is proud of them, because these Holy Beloveds are at the pinnacle of an incomparable, extreme nearness to God, and are circumambulating the Ka'ba only—and only—for ***SUBḤĀNALLĀH, AL ḤAMDULILLAH, LĀ ILĀHA ILLA ALLĀH and ALLĀHU AKBAR.***[2]

In between these four stages there are several other classifications and ranks, but for brevity's sake we will leave these for another time.

THE RUKNS (CORNERS) OF THE KA'BA

Since the construction of the Ka'ba is in cubic form, its four corners are fixed on the ground and from primordial times have been called "Rukn" (lit. foundation, corner):

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[1] Kulaīnī, Al-Kāfī, Bāb al- Hujjah, Yaqīn.

[2] See Ṣaddūq, Muḥammad, Man lā Yaḥzar a- Faqīh, Vol.2, p. 124, section 2, no. 540. Ṣubhānallāh (Celestial-Glorious God), Alḥamdulilah (Praise Belong to God Only), la ellāha illā Allāh (There Is no god but God) and Allāhu Akbar (God is Great). They are the recurrent dhikr (inner re-memoration) as well. M.S.

1. THE BLACK STONE'S RUKN: The corner of the House where the Ḥajar al-Aswad (the Black Stone) is encased is called by this name. The pilgrim must start the Ṭawāf from this corner exactly face to face with Ḥajar al-Aswad and end it precisely at the same point.

a. ḤAJAR AL-ASWAD: Is a Stone and its color is black; it is encased in this corner, 150 centimeters from the circumambulatory ground level. In the dialogue mentioned earlier, Imām as-Sajjād (s.m.a.) incisively expounds: "Touching hands ('shaking hands) with Ḥajar al-Aswad is touching ('joining') hands with God's".[1] This Stone was installed in this corner by the Prophet of Islam and later on by Allāh's Vicegerents, the Ahl al-Baīts (s.m.a). If Ḥajar al-Aswad is removed or crumbles down, it is only the Supreme Divine Preserver of Wilāyat, Imām-i Zamān who possesses the Godly competency and authority to reinstall it back to its place. The uncompromising Fealty (Bi'yat) to Ḥajar al-Aswad, equates the Fealty of the Messenger of God and of the Imām (May God hasten his Re-appearance), since the Fealty with them is the Fealty with Lord—personally, directly. "***Verily, those who pledge their*** [*solemn*] ***Fealty unto thee*** [*O' Apostle of God*] ***do but pledge Fealty unto Allāh; the Hand of God is above all hands.***"[2] Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, with utmost devotion and gratitude shown to God, keep these directions in heart and take heed while "placing your hand upon the Black Stone" (Istilām, lit. touch lightly, softly).

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[1] The eminent, imprescriptible Authority belongs to God only. M.S.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 48 al-Fatḥ (The Victory), 10.

This Holy Stone was for the first time placed in this Rukn by the Prophet Adam (s.m.a.), then by the Prophet Abraham (the intimate friend of God), and again by the Messenger of God, then by Imām Ḥusayn and Imām as-Sajjād (s.m.a.). Ultimately, during the era of the Caramathians rulers[1], the ruthless ruler Mu'takifubillāh, committed the sacrilegious act of removing the Black Stone; it was re-installed by the holy hands of the Last Imām of Imāms, His Holiness Al-Mahdī, the Guided, the Holder of Time (s.m.a.).

The story of Ja'far Ibn Muḥammad Qūluyih, famously known as Abū Hāshim (may the peace of Allāh be upon him) is notorious in relation with the re-installment of the Black Stone, and occurred when Abū Hāshim decided to meet his Holiness the Ever-Living Imām. He wrote a letter to His Holiness informing his intention, and the written reply, inter alia, by the Supreme Remnant of Allāh back to Abū Hāshim comprises this story.[2]

Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) once said: "*And that (the Black Stone) is the Right hand of God the All High on His earth. His creatures-servants join hands (Beiat) with God through it (Black Stone).*"[3]

The Black Stone is the very same revered Stone, where at the time of his triumphant Return (Parousia), the Ever-present Imām, Lord of Time (s.m.a.) will lean on it. In a resounding fatidic Call, he will proclaim solemnly to all mankind: "***O' you, world dwellers! I am the awaited Imām. O' habitants of the world! I am the son of the one who was martyred in thirst.***"

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[1] The Caramathian Dynasty started in 297 of Ḥijrah/909 C.E. and ended in 470 of Ḥijrah/1077 C.E. M.S.

[2] For more information, see the monumental and much celebrated book called Najmalsaqīb, by the traditionalist Nūrī.

[3] al-Hurr al-Āmili, Muḥammad Ḥasan, Vasā'il Al-Shī'a,Vol.13, p. 320.

The Holy Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.w.a.), foretold that this is the Stone of Solemn Pledge of the people of Wilāyat with the Supreme Holder of Wilāyat (the last Awaited Imām), who, in proximity of it, will Re-Pledge his Fealty with his closest companions and aides.

This Stone is a most recognized place, kissed by the Honorable Messenger of God (s.w.a.) and by all the divinely Pure Infallible Imāms (s.m.a.), who always strove with assiduity and constancy for the Cause of Supreme Truth—God. By one kiss—by one brief medium—we place our lips where the lips of the Prophet and the holy Imāms of Allāh kissed. For this reason, it is allowable for people to kiss the pilgrim's lips.

It is said that the Honorable Messenger of Allāh (s.w.a.), in all his Ṭawāf(obligatory or recommended), always gently touched the Holy Ḥajar al-Aswad with his hands.[1]

b.ḤATĪM: The distance between the Ḥajar al-Aswad and the Door of the House of Allāh is called the Ḥatīm. Performing Ṣalāt in this location is superior (in spiritual merit) to praying in any other place. Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) informs us that this space is called Ḥatīm because the people get trodden down by the pressing crowd. The throng of people should not impede the pilgrim's desire to perform two rak'at of prayers in this location, because the spiritual intention in mind and heart (Nīah) of the faithful believer is certainly superior to the physical manifestation of that very intention. In an exceptional circumstance, such as this one, the pilgrim is allowed to perform the Ṣalāt while moving, by simply gesturing in place of inclining to the knee (rukū') and falling in prostration (sajdah). By doing so, the pilgrim is not deprived from attaining, or perceiving, the spiritual rewards of the symbolic act of prayer.

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[1] Kāfī, Vol. 4, p. 404, section H.

c. ABRAHAM'S PLACE: Also called Abraham's Rank (or Station), it is situated almost directly facing the Door of the House of God, thirteen meters away from the Ka'ba itself, on the left side of Ḥajar al-Aswad. It lies under a small golden colored dome. Abraham's Place is within the courtyard of the Sacred Mosque of Allāh.

The rock which preserves the imprint of the Prophet Abraham's, or "the friend of God's" footsteps is inside a glass case. This extraordinary monument has been meticulously preserved over the centuries. It is by itself a Sign of God indicating the direction of daily prayers. Furthermore, every circumambulation requires a Ṣalāt which the pilgrim must perform behind the Place of Abraham and in its exact direction. The Place of Abraham is also the sign of the "boundary" for the area of circumambulation around the Ka'ba.

There is no place on earth like 'the Place of Abraham' from whence to reach Paradise. This rock is one of the explicit Signs of God. The Holy Qur'ān describes it as such: "***In*** [*the Sacred House of Allāh*] ***are Signs manifests,*** [*among them*] ***the Place of Abraham*** (*the Devotee of God*]; ***therein whoever entereth is safe and protected.***"[1] When the prophet Abraham (s.m.a.) was divinely assigned to erect the Ka'ba's walls, and was calling people to perform Ḥajj he placed his two feet over this very same rock as exactly we see today. This place has gained so much respect and such High Rank in God's view that when the Qur'ān mentions some of the Signs of God the Glorious within the Sacred Mosque, it cites and points to this "Place of Abraham". Over this hard stone there is the imprint of two footsteps of the intimate friend of the Merciful God. After centuries, this imprint is still visible and to be contemplated on. With

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1. Qu'rān, Ṣūrah 4 Āl-i Imrān, 97.

God's Grace, this blessed Place remains immune and undisturbed by the desecrating events and turmoil of this world.

2. THE IRAQI RUKN: This corner of the majestic Ka'ba situated between the Door and the Sepulcher of Ismā'īl is the famed "Iraqi Corner". It is named thus because it is located in the direction of Iraq.

a. Ḥijr-i Ismā'īl: It is located within the area from the Syrian Corner to Madīnah's Corner. In this space, a short, semi-circular wall has been built, which evokes the motherly arms of Ḥājar, the Virtuous consort, wife and companion of the Prophet Abraham; the mother and the trainer of her son Ismā'īl ('the slaughtered in sacrifice for God', Ẓabīḥullāh). Within the distance between this short but regal wall and the Ka'ba is the dwelling-place of Ismā'īl, and also the burial-place of his mother Ḥājar.

Note that seventy apostles of God are buried in this space (May the blessing of God be upon them), which adds to the gloriousness of Ḥijr-e Ismā'īl.

b. The Downspout of Mercy: Installed at the top of the northern wall of the Ka'ba. It was chromium-plated in gold, installed for the first time by Walīd ibn 'Abd ul-Mālik in the year 91 of Ḥijrah. The present one was installed by the Ottoman Sulṭān Abd ul- Ḥamid Osmānī in the year 1273 of Ḥijrah.

3. THE SYRIAN RUKN: The corner next to Ḥijr-e Ismā'īl is called the Syrian Corner since this Corner lies in the direction of Syria.

a. MUSTAJĀR: After we pass Syrian Corner, we find an outline of another door on the wall located exactly opposite the Door of the Ka'ba. This door was closed off with the same stones the Ka'ba was built. This section of the wall is called the Mustajār (the place of refuge, protection). It is recommended (mustaḥab) that the pilgrim of the majestic House of God cling in need to this section of the Ka'ba, revealing his or her absolute wretchedness, and confess, outwardly as well as inwardly his or her sins(mistakes) so that God willing the confession gains God's full attention and forgiveness.

The Mustajār is an auspicious section of the Ka'ba because in the proximity of it, Fāṭima bint Assad, in visible pains of parturition and difficulty, groans and approaches closer to the House imploring God for His relief and succor. As she seeks refuge at the Ka'ba, this section of the wall splits a bit, and "they"[1] invite her inside the Ka'ba for the illustrious birth of a newborn child who is Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.).

In truth, the Mustajār is the place of "shelter" for the pilgrims of the Holy House of Allāh. Whoever seeks refuge here with a sentiment of loving devotion toward Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) and his descendents, it is as if he or she has taken refuge in the safekeeping Arms of All-Merciful God.

4. THE YAMĀNĪ RUKN: This Corner is after the Syrian Corner and before Ḥajar al-Aswad on the south side of the Ka'ba. It is named thus because it lies in the direction of Yemen. His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) has related the following: "*The Yamānī Corner is one of the gates to Paradise. From the day this Gate was opened, it has never been closed again.*"[2]

His Holiness also stated (by the authority of his father Imām al-Bāqir, s.m.a.): "*The Messenger of God was placing his*

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[1] The pronoun "they" could refer to the supreme angelic invisible beings assigned by God the task to assist in the event. M.S.

[2] Kāfī, vol.4, p. 408 - 409

hands and his face on Ḥajar al-Aswad as well as on this Yamānī Corner, and kissing them. I myself saw that my father did the same."[1]

Without a doubt, the Existentiating Reason for the Creation of the Universe itself originates, pre-eternally, from the Auspicious Beings of the Holy Ahl al-Baīt (s.m.a.). And God has dignified the Yamānī Corner to be the inaugural Place of Birth of the First Supreme Wilāyat, Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), because the very Soul, the existence of Imām 'Alī is the utmost Favor of God to Mankind, the greatest providential grace (exoteric as well as esoteric) from the Glorious God. "***And God completed on you His Bounties, apparent and hidden.***"[2]

The Ka`ba prides itself for being the place of Leitmotiv on the universe in terms of the nativity of that grand Man. This corner possesses a rare grace and glory. All of the Ahl al-Baīt enter Paradise from this very blessed Corner.

SHĀDHARVĀN: At the ground level, a footing-type enforcement has been built which protrudes obliquely from the edifice of the Ka'ba, and functions to strengthen the walls. It extends from the outside walls and encompasses all four walls and corners of the Ka'ba. It is said in the Rawāyat that from the Lord's Throne, one hundred and twenty Blessings of God pour over the Fourth heaven where Baīt al-Ma'mūr is located, and from there cascade over the Ka'ba onto the earth. The Shādhravān is the recipient of all these Blessings. Therefore, the Shādhravān is an integral

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1. Allāmah Ṭabātabāī, Al- Muntaqa, p. 216, section 249, referred from Dā'im, Vol.4, p. 408, section H.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 31 Luqmān, 20.

part of the Ka'ba and the universal Qiblah, but any circumambulation over it is null; the pilgrim must perform around it.

WILĀYAT AS THE ESSENTIATING FACTOR OR THE SOUL OF THE ṬAWĀF

His Holiness Imām al-Bāqir (s.m.a.), who himself is the divine Epiphany of the Knowledge of the unrevealed Essence of God the Glorious, and who possesses the First and Last divine Knowledge, once had the privilege to perform the Ḥajj. His Holiness once saw people oblivious to the Mystery of the Ḥajj —which is Wilāyat—performing the circumambulation around the Ka'ba. Suddenly his Holiness said:

> *"In the (pre-Islamic) era of Ignorance people were doing the Ṭawāf the same way: circulating around it seven times. Islam did not come to continue the same custom. The pilgrims have been ordered to perform the Ṭawāf around the House of Allāh and afterward approach us (Ahl al-Baīt) and declare their fealty to Wilāyat, and to love us, to cherish us, to extend their helping hands towards us."*[1]

Then His Holiness recited the wishful request of the Prophet Abraham, denoted in the divine words of this Āyah in Qur'ān: "***O' Lord! Make You the heart of*** [*some group of*] ***men earnestly love my offspring.***"[2] Therefore, the ardent love for the Messenger of God's Ahl al-Baīt is the reaped, ultimate fruition of Abraham's invocation and prayer.

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1. al-'Arūzī al-huwaīzī, Nūr al-Thaqalaīn, Vol.2, p. 555.
2. Qur'ān, Şūrah 2 al-Baqarah (The Heifer), 37.

A similar statement is found in the Ḥadīth where it is repeatedly reported by the Infallible Imāms of God that: "*The stones of the Ka'ba do not affect either good nor bad*," reminding the pilgrim of the Ka'ba that at the proximity of this "Ka'ba of stone" one should reach the threshold of the "Ka'ba of Heart" which is the basis of Wilāyat, and faith in God's Governorship. This Ḥadīth also cautions the pilgrim not to perform the Ṭawāf without faith in the Wilāyat. The Prophet of God (s.w.a) was not the Message-Bearer of an incomplete Religion, but raised it above all religions to perfection. He unified, with God's command, all the bounties of God, the exoteric as well as the esoteric, the Apparent as well as the Hidden (May the infinite Peace and Blessing of God be upon him).

It is suitable here to note that the word Jāhillīyah (Ignorance) in Ahl al-Baīt's lexicon refers to those who speak of Islam without the divinely assigned Governorship and Wilāyat. "*Whoever dies without having "cognized" the Imām of his or her Age, dies the death of the Era of Ignorance (of the Era of mankind's pre-Islamic Unawareness of God.)*"[1]

It is important to remember Imām al-Bāqir's (s.m.a.) statement, wherein His Holiness states that he does not consider a Ḥajj a true Ḥajj if the pilgrim does not encounter the ubiquitous, Omnipresent Imām of God: "***To meet the Imām is*** [*a part*] ***of Ḥajj*** ."[2]

This Imām's exegesis is inspired by another Āyah that states: "***I have completed My Favor on you all.***"[3] That is to say, the completion of the Religion, Shar'īa and Islam, utterly depends on Wilāyat and on Divinely Commissioned Governorship. The Religion which pleases God is only the one infused with Imām 'Alī's Wilāyat and his honorable offspring elected

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1. Al-Kāfī, Bab al-Hujjah.
2. Wasāil, Vol.10, p. 254.
3. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 5 al-Māi'dah (The Repast), 3.

by God Himself. Otherwise, the so-called Islam is not true Islam, but a disqualified and incomplete, crude religion of Ignorance. Many effects and spiritual bounties as well as Qur'ānic promises about Ḥajj are barren, if disconnected from the Wilāyat and from the true spiritual perceptional cognition of Ahl al-Baīt.

This thesis is evidenced by the dialogue between the holy Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) and a questioner who wanted to know how the Āyah "***Whosoever enters the Sacred Mosque is in safety and protection***"[1] could be interpreted. His Holiness answered: "*Whoever intends to betake oneself to the House of God and knows that God commanded him or her to do so, and with the most profound appreciation of Us the way it ought to be, certainly he or she will be safe in this world and in the next.*"[2] Thus, the full safety and security of the Sacred Mosque is not dependent exclusively on the Ka'ba, the Sacred House of Allāh, but also on the accompaniment of the Wilāyat to be a meaningful goal of spiritual attainment.

In another statement, the Holy Sixth Imām declares: "*Whoever enters the Great Sacred Mosque of Allāh in Makkah and recognizes our Truth, and knowing that God commanded him or her to do so and appreciate Us the way it ought to be, then All-Merciful God will absolve his or her sins and alleviate for him or her the hardship and toil of this world, and on Doomsday." Then His Holiness emphasized: "Indeed, the exegesis of this Āyah, '**whoever enters the Holy Mosque of Allāh is in***

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 Āl-i Imrān, 97.
2. al-Hurr al-Āmilī , Muḥammad Ibn Ḥasan, Vasā'il al-Shīa'h, Vol.8 , The Book of Ḥajj , Section 38, H. 12, p. 67 narrated by Al-Kulaīnī, al-Furu', Vol.1, p.236. See also Bahrānī, Al-Burhān, Vol.1, p. 667, H. 341 - 842.

***safety*[1]*' is exactly this."*[2]

ṢALĀT-PRAYER IN THE SACRED MOSQUE

Masjid ul-Ḥaram consists of the Ka'ba, the Mat'af (the courtyard around the Ka'ba for the circumambulation) and all the arcades around it. It is connoted in the Rawayāt that one Ṣalāt performed in the Sacred Mosque of God is equal in value to one hundred thousand Ṣalāts performed elsewhere.[3]

ZAMZAM

Zamzam is an incessant and ongoing miracle of God. It is the subsisting, everlasting memory of the Grace of God the High upon the Prophet Ismā'īl (s.m.a.). The event occurred as follows: Abraham (s.m.a.) left the infant child and his mother Ḥājar in the vicinity of the Ka'ba in the barren valley; he set off for the Baīt al Muqaddas (the Heavenly House in Palestine). The heat of the desert and the thirst doomed this child and his mother to disquiet and grief, until the mother, in her strenuous, desperate peregrination in search of water between the two bare hillocks of Ṣafā and Marwah, saw a mirage of water. When the mother gave up hope, she turned back to her child. Immediately, she saw water gushing out miraculously from a spring-like hole where the dying infant was pressing his small feet on the sand. This ongoing fountain of water is that same spring of Zamzam.

After every Ṭawāf and its relative prayer, the pilgrim is recommended to drink from this blissful fountain. The Prophet, during the years he lived in Madīnah and until the last day of his life on earth requested and accepted the Zamzam water from pilgrims of the House of God.[1]

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 al-Ma'idah (The Repast), 97.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Kulaīnī, Muḥammad Ibn Ya'qūb, Kāfī, Vol.4, p. 526.

THE MOUNT OF ṢAFĀ

This mount (or hillock) benefited with the name Ṣafā after the attributes God chose for certain Apostles, especially for the Prophet Adam (s.m.a.). The Glorious Qur'ān states: "***Verily, Allāh did choose Adam and Noah and the descendants of Abraham and the descendants of Imran*** [*father of Moses*] ***above all the worlds***."[2] In this Āyah, the mentioned Apostles are the "chosen" ones of God. Because of this Āyah, anytime we recite the Zīārah (spiritual visitation) of the Prophet Adam, we mention him as "the Chosen of God" (Ṣafāt-Allāh), such as, "*Peace and blessing be upon Adam, the chosen of Allāh (Ṣafāt Allāh)*".[3] It is recorded that since the Prophet Adam (s.m.a) found himself at the top of the Mount of Ṣafā overlooking the Ka'ba as he was one of the chosen ones, then this mount also has been chosen by God.[4] Indeed, as this mount was chosen because of the sincerity, peace and purity in the heart of Adam the Chosen one, there are certain pilgrims who, once being at the top of the Mount of Ṣafā' the chosen, will be purified, peaceful and chosen as well.

THE MOUNT MARWAH

This Mount was given the name Marwa`h because our mother Hawah (Eve) found herself on the summit of this Mount, and because

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[1] Allāmah Ṭabātabāī, a- muntaqa min kitāb sunan al-nabbī, p. 216, H.350

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 Āl-i Imrān, 33.

[3] Extracted from Mafātīh al-Jinān, the Ziārah (spiritual visitation) Wāri`th.

[4] Kulaīnī, Muḥammad Ibn-i Ya'qūb, Kāfī, Vol.4, p. 190.

Ma'ra literally means "woman."[1]

The course between the Mount of Ṣafā and the Mount of Marwa is called Mas'ā (Lit. strenuous effort). Today, with new developments and construction, the Mas'ā is connected to the area of the Sacred Mosque. The Mas'ā is 395 meters and 50 centimeters long and 20 meters wide. The height of the first floor is 12 meters and that of the second floor is 9 meters.

FAREWELL TO THE KA'BA

Anytime Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) bade farewell to the Ka'ba, His Holiness thus recited:

"O' my Lord! I go back from the Ḥajj in truth of Tawhīd and (with) the negation of everything, everything but You!"[2]

We see that the pure undifferentiated divine Unity (Tawhīd) renders Man to negate the polytheism and lead toward Him only, as the divine Holy Imāms (s.m.a) stressed.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] With this Imām Ali's (s.m.a.) dialogue with the All-Glorious God, the spiritual stages of Tawhīd and Tanzīh (with all their lexical subtleties) find their "meaning". M.S.

THE ḤAJJ'S DEVOTIONAL RITUALS

Before we begin discussing the themes and intricacies of the Ḥajj's devotional Rituals, we will briefly discuss the holy months in Islam.

■ THE SACRED MONTHS

Before Islam, four months of the year were respected. In the Qur'ān, these same four months are emphasized from all other months of the year as distinguished and holy: "***Verily the number of months with God is twelve months in God's Book*** *(Divine Knowledge) (since)* ***the Day He created the heavens and earth; of these*** *[months of the year]* ***four are holy; that is the established Reckoning.***"[1] These months possess many unmatched peculiarities. For instance, warfare therein is considered sacrilegious. "***They ask thee*** *[O' Our Apostle Muḥammad]* ***concerning the Holy Months, about fighting therein; Say, fighting therein is a grave Sin.***"[2]

These holy months are Dhi-l Qa'dah, Dhi-l Ḥajjah, Muḥarram and Rajab.

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 9 al-Tawbah, 36.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah, 217.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MONTH DHI-L QA'DAH

The discussion about the devotional rituals of Ḥajj will dedicate special attention to these two months of the year, Dhi-l Qa'dah and Dhi-l Ḥajjah—which are next to each other. Therefore it is suitable to mention here the important events occurred during the month of Dhi-l Qa'dah:

1. On the twenty fifth day of this month the Prophet Abraham, the intimate friend of God, (s.m.a.) was born.
2. His Holiness the Christ (s.m.a.) was born on this day as well.
3. On the same day, another event took place: the foundation of the Ka`ba was laid, and its subsequent construction took place. This day, the twenty fifth, is also called Daḥ ul-Arḍ i.e., the earth came "to exist" and expanded. It has been said that "from beneath the foundation of the Ka'ba, the earth began to expand."[1]
4. When the Prophet Moses (s.m.a.) reached the high Rank of Apostleship, the All-Merciful God intended to stipulate the appropriate terms with His Messenger. The choice, and its implementation, was up to God the Speaker, Who thus communicated with His Moses the interlocutor: "***And we made an Appointment*** [*to meet*] ***with Moses*** [*after*] ***thirty nights, supplemented and completed with ten; thus was completed the terms of his Lord— forty nights.***"[2]

   These "forty nights" (Arba'īn) commence with the beginning of the holy month of Dhi-l Qa'dah and end with the end of the tenth day of the holy month of Dhi-l Ḥajjah, at which point the devotional rituals of the Ḥajj reach their climax and culmination.

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[1] For more information about this event, see "One thousand and one words," Ayatollah Ḥasan Zādeh Āmilī Vol.1, p. 459463-.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 7 al-A'rāf (The Elevated Places), 142.

In addition, it is deduced from this graceful Āyah that this period (the whole month of Dhi-l Qa'dah through the tenth of Dhi-l Ḥajjah) is the best span of time, and opportunity, for one to withdraw from the world for forty nights, in order to acquire spiritual maturity and ascend to the utmost level of Nearness and spiritual connection to God the All-High. This period is known as the period of the forty days and nights (Arba'īn) of voluntary "solitude" to gain divine wisdom.

5. This very day (the twenty fifth of Dhi-l Qadah) is the most important and infinitely precious datum. Today the Resuscitation and Revival of the earth and its dwellers will occur. On this very day, the messianic promise of the Return (Parousia) of the Awaited Imām, the Master of Time, will be fulfilled.[1]

The Omnipresent Imām of Time (May our souls be ransomed for him) will arise and bestow upon Man another Life more worthy for him.

May his sublime imminent Return, Parousia, soon be fulfilled; May we still be present and believe to assist His Holiness with our sincerest inmost love and vehement zeal.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST TEN DAYS OF DHI-L ḤAJJAH

1. The first ten days and nights of the Month of Dhi-l Ḥajjah are filled with such extensive amounts of grace and Attainment that God Himself states with His solemn oath: "....***And*** [*by*] ***the ten Nights....***[2] [*of the first part of Dhi-l Ḥajjah*]. ***Is this oath important***

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[1] Excerpts from the Mafātīh al Jinān, the Rituals ('Amāl) of Daḥ ul-Arḍ.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 89 al-Fajr (The Dawn), 2.

for those who possess understanding?"[1]

Anyone endowed with higher intellect and keenness of perception will discover that in these nights and days God the High pays special attention and consideration to all His servants, the devoted seekers of His Path. In this regard, the following Ḥadīth of the honorable Prophet (s.w.a.) can be of aid: "*There is no time other than this [the first ten nights and days of Dhi-l Ḥajj ah], therein the good deeds and endeavors for spiritual progress are the most loved by the Lord.*"[2] You then, brother! Sister! Strive, earnestly! Take to heart, cherish, honor this period which the Lord loves and cherishes.

2. Another great epoch-making event that occurred in this month of pilgrimage is the revelation of the glorious Ṣūrah of Al Tawbah (Repentance) and its public and official Proclamation of Disavowal (birā'at, "immunity")to the treacherous pagans and infidels by the Master of Disavowal, Amīr, Chief of the faithful believers—Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), during the Ḥajj : "***And an Announcement from God and His Apostle unto the people on one of the greatest day of Ḥajj*** (*the day of Arafāt or the day of feast sacrifice-Qurbānī*) ***that God and His Messenger reject*** (*detest*) ***the unfaithful.***"[3] After the divine Revelation of these blessed Āyāt, some believed at that time that the head of the tribe Banī Thaqīfah[4] could be the one to read out this official declaration of rejection to the great assembly of Ḥajj. The One Who sent down the Revelation did

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 89 al-Fajr (The Dawn), 4.

[2] Vasā'il al-Shīa, Vol.10, p. 221

[3] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 9 al-Tawbah (The Repetance),3.

[4] Banī Thaqīfah literally means "portico." This is a branch of Sa'īdah tribe in Madīnah. M.S.

immediately and irrefutably issue the nominee and trustee for the public announcement of this Āyah as well: "[*O' Messenger*] ***This Disavowal must you, or a man who is of your Self, fulfill*** [*announce*]."[1] For this reason, Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), who is the Prophet's (s.w.a) soul, the closest human being to the Last Apostle of God[2] was the only person other than the one to whom the Āyah was divinely conveyed, who could be entrusted with the task to read this Āyah publicly to unbelievers.

Indeed, 'Alī is the Soul of the Prophet of Allāh (May the everlasting blessings of God be upon both of them). As God Himself stated on the Prophet's behalf in the Āyah of Mubāhilah, "***Our Selves and your Selves,***" designating 'Alī as the Prophet's deputy and his "self." It is suitable—at this stage of the Ḥajj rituals and spirituality—to emulate these great Masters and the Glorious Qur'ān, reviving in this majestic divine-political Assembly of Ḥajj, the Wilāyathood and the uncompromising Disavowal. These are two precepts of original Islam imbued within the performance of the devotional rituals (in the Territory of 'Arafāt, for example). Certainly, it is original and renovating that every year–in the Absence of the Ever-living Imām-i Zamān – this Disavowal of pagans is publicly announced by his Excellency the Supreme Deputy of the Wilāyat (May God protect him). This reminds Muslims of their everyday responsibilities when following him and re-proclaiming their abjuration of pagans in the very same land of God's Revelation.

It has been reported that the Messenger of God (s.w.a.) said: *No*

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 Āl-i Imrān, 61.
2. In the sense of "Alter Ego", pertained to Imām 'Alī only, ascribed by All- Glorious God and the Honorable Prophet (s.w.a). M.S.

day is more cherished and loved by God than the first ten days (and nights) of the month of Dhi-l-Ḥajj ah.[1] In another report also from the beloved Prophet (s.w.a) in person: "*There is no other period in any other month more loved and its devotional rituals more cherished by God than the first ten days of the month of Dhi-l-Ḥajjah*".[2]

THE RITUALS OF THE FIRST TEN DAYS AND NIGHTS OF DHI-L-ḤAJJAH

One of the Devotional rituals (not compulsory) in this first period of the Month is to perform two raka'ts of Ṣalāt (prayer) between the Ṣalāt of maghrib (sunset) and the Ṣalāt of Esha` (evening). In this Ṣalāt, after the recitation of the Ṣūrah Ḥamd one should recite, in Arabic, the Āyah of God's Appointment (Miqāt) with Moses (s.w.a.), as follows: "***And We made Appointment with Moses for thirty nights and completed it with*** [*adding*] ***ten*** [*more*], ***thus he completed the term of his Lord*** [*for*] ***forty nights, and said Moses unto his brother Aaron***: "***take thou my place among my people; Act rightly and follow not*** [*never*] *the path of the mischief-makers.*"[3] It is reported in the rawāyat that anyone performing these two Rak'ats of Ṣalāt, co-participates with the Pilgrim's spiritual attainments. It can be said that even those who are absent and not privileged to be in the pilgrimage Ḥajj, by performing these two raka't of prayer anywhere they reside, it is as if participating in divine Ḥajj. Furthermore, it is safe to state that anyone doing this specific prayer and reciting the above Āyah in the prayer refreshes the fervent desire to be in the sacred land of the Beloved God. This period of the month has been coined as the time that

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1. al-Ḥurr al-Āmilī , Muḥammad Ḥasan , Vasā'il al-Shīa , Vol.14, p. 273.
2. Seyyed Ibn-i Ṭāvūs, Raḍī ad-dīn, al-Iqbāl, p. 317.
3. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 7 al-A'rāf (The Elevated Places), 142.

man can get very close to All-Merciful God.

One of the most esteemed rituals is to read the following invocation, or duā, "*There is no other god but Allāh in the midst of the multitudes of Nights, of Days, of Eternities....*"[1] This duā is a ceaseless, recurring declaration of true, original Islam; of rejection of polytheism in any form; of penitent confession; of admittance of powerlessness before All-Mighty God; of mental introspection; of outward confession of guilt before all-Mighty Lord; of faith and of utter submissiveness to the absolute Tawhīd (Oneness of God) in its purest and unaltered form.

■ TARWĪAH

The eighth day of the month Dhi-l Ḥajjah is called Tarwīah. The word Tarwīah means "to collect water." The pilgrims in ancient times were taking water from Makkah for the next day into the journey, as they were leaving Makkah for the barren desert of 'Arafāt. Tarwīah also means, "to think," or "to pensively meditate." The latter meaning exists because on this very day, the Prophet Abraham the friend of God received the shattering Command to sacrifice his son Ismā'īl. Steeped in thought and meditation, he wondered what will happen if Ismā'īl or his mother show hesitation, or weakness, to obey God's command. This was the time of test. The Shaīṭān and the Ego, both, were in ambush. With God's Grace Ismā'īl and Agar overcame all the sinister and insinuating forces of evil with powerful and decisive conduct. Both ultimately crushed the

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[1] Mafātīh al-Jinān, the Rituals (A'amaal) of the holy Month Dhi-l Ḥajjah. Dahr (lit .Time), in this context, could also suggest Aevum, or pre/post eternal 'duration' of Time. Although the term dahr (plural, duhūr), could mean also qualitative Time, in which past and future are 'simultaneously' in the present. M.S.

Shaīṭān and the Shaītān's force of demons.[1] From this test Abraham emerged triumphant and proud, and reached the highest Rank of being an Imām [Imāmhood].

"[*And remember*] ***When we tried Abraham with certain difficult tests*** [*injunctions*]; ***he fulfilled them well.*** [*God*] ***said 'Verily I make thee Imām.*** *"*[2]

Abraham was greatly overwhelmed by reaching the zenith of human achievement—the Rank of Imāmhood. Therefore, he implored God that his progeny be admitted to this grand and supreme Rank as well. He asked fervently: "***And my offspring also?***'[3] And God the Glorious in reply sent the revelation: "***My Covenant reaches not the Evildoers and Unjust.***"[4] In our belief, solely Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), who—according to all Immaculate Imāms (s.m.a.) "has not been an unbeliever in Allāh even in a blink of an eye"—and owns the divine competency and authority to ascend the upmost heights of the Rank of Imāmhood. This privilege does not belong to the contemptuous head of the Banī Thaqīfah's[5] group who—as History itself confessed—lived, after the advent of Islam, half of his life as an iniquitous false-worshiper, even though the Glorious Qur'ān emphasizes false-worshiping as a "grave iniquity." The Qur'ān states, "***Verily, false worship is the greatest iniquity.***"[6] Therefore, any

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1. Shaīṭān the "rejected" (Rajīm) is another Qur'ān is nickname for Shaītān. M.S.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah, 124.
3. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah, 124.
4. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2, al-Baqarah, 125.
5. Thaqīfah (Portico) of the Banī Saī`dah, a branch of Khazraj tribe in Madīnah, wherein it did occur the distortion of the divine succession of the Prophet (s.w.a.) unbeknownst to Imām 'Alī(s.m.a.), who is unequalled in faith and devotion. M.S.
6. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 31 al-Luqmān, 13.

unauthorized or unqualified person on the street will have neither divine prerequisites for Imāmhood, nor the Esoteric and Exoteric authority to lead Islamic Society.

THE RITUALS OF THE DAY OF TARWĪAH

About the not compulsory rituals in this day the following statement of His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) guides Muslims in the rituals of the Day of Tarwīah[1]: "When the eighth day arrives:

1. Do the Qusl (complete bath of the body with the intention, in mind and in heart, specific for entering the state of Iḥrām);
2. Put on your Iḥrām (pilgrim's garb which consists of two seamless wrappers only);
3. Enter bare foot into the Holy Mosque;
4. Perform two raka'ts of Ṣalāt behind and on the direction of Maqām-i Ibrāhim (Abraham's Place), or inside the Ḥijr-i Ismā'īl;
5. After the prayer, sit in the Sacred Mosque until the midday arrives. Perform the obligatory prayer of midday, and its relative invocations and duas;
6. Stipulate with your inner "Self" the firm and, solemn oath of being in the state of Iḥrām. Tie, firmly and decisively, your Iḥrām garb, and in the proximity of the Ka'ba, recite your Labbaīk;
7. Humbly and in devotion prepare yourself to proceed to Minā.

Once his holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a) was asked, "Is it better to go to Ḥajj by foot or by mount? "*If you go by conveyance*," his Holiness replied, "*the pilgrim is physically more capable of performing all the devotional rituals, prayers, meditations, and inner colloquiums with God*

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[1] Kulaīnī, Muḥammad Ibn-i Ya'qūb, Kāfī, Vol.4, p. 454.

(Nīāyish[1]).[2]

■ THE NIGHT OF 'ARAFĀT[3]

On the ninth night of the mount of Dhi-l Ḥajjah Lord will fulfill every felicitous and benignant request. It is a night of nocturnal wakefulness, of amorous prayer and of colloquium with the Glorious Lord (Nīāyish). It is a night of remorseful confessions, and a night to beseech. One of the most powerful and stimulating devotional rituals par excellence of this Glorious Night is the recital of the Holy Imām Ḥusayn's Zīārah (visitation in mind and in heart). "The All-Merciful God will shower His Mercy and forgiveness to the pilgrims of Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.) first and afterward on the pilgrims of Ḥajj in ''Arafāt."[4] If you pass this night in the valley of Minā, it is a graceful accomplishment.

■ THE DAY OF 'ARAFĀT

The ninth day of this month is called the "Day of 'Arafāt."[5] On this day the pilgrim must sojourn in the plain of Arafāt from exactly midday to exactly sunset. Whoever stops and encamps in Arafāt directly attains God's Infinite Misericordia not only for himself, but also, according to the Holy Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.), for any faithful believer who is "not present" in Arafāt but closely or distantly related to God's pilgrim; he or she too will certainly attain God's Mercy and forgiveness.

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[1] Nīāyish, in Farsi means the inward, intimate, confidential dialogue. A soul's colloquium with Lord, sometimes wordless, sometimes melodious melancholic litany, almost to the limit of "soliloquium". See also the footnote on p. 40. M.S.

[2] al-Hurr al-Āmilī, Muḥammad Ḥasan, Vasā'il al-Shīa Vol.8, The Book of Ḥajj, Section 22, H.5. Narrated by Kulaīnī, Furu-i Kāfi, Vol.1, p. 291.

[3] The word ara`fa means mystical knowledge also. M.S.

[4] Al-Hurr al -Āmilī, Muḥammad Ḥasan, Vasā'il al Shīa, Vol.10, The Book of Ḥajj, Section 49, H. 5. Narrated by Ibn Quliwaīh, Kāmil az-ziārah, p. 170.

[5] Ḥajj starts in sensu stricto M.S.

During the Ḥajj pilgrimage, one time Holy Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) entered the territory of 'Arafāt, he said: "*Here is 'Arafāt! Through it recognize the value of your devotional rituals and with compunction confess your own guilt and of having transgressed the Law of God and sins.*"[1] In this very day of 'Arafāt, God manifests His limitless Mercy "first" upon the pilgrims of the Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.) in Karbala; answers their prayer, forgives their sins. God "listens" to them. "Afterward," His Glorious Manifestation of forgiveness will be upon the great Assembly of pilgrims in 'Arafāt, bestowing as He did upon the pilgrims of Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.).

Therefore, the Imām Ḥusayn's recital of Ziarah (visitation in heart and in mind) must not be underestimated. It is suitable to perform both rituals on the same day, reciting Imām Ḥusayn's Ziarah, or invocation, from the morning till midday, then from midday until sunset performing the Ṣalāts and prayers specific to the day of 'Arafāt. Arafāt is an appropriate territory for seeking, and gaining, the Knowledge (ma'rifah). All of us human beings, in the pre-existential time and Universe in Qur'ānic lexicon called the World of Zar, before our birth had pledged our personal[2] Covenant with our Lord upon a question posed by God to man "Am I not your Master?"[3] After our birth into this world we recklessly and unmindfully abandoned our Promise (pre-eternal vow of fidelity) with

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1. Kulaīnī, Muḥammad Ibn Ya'qūb, Usul al-Kāfi , Vol.4, p. 207.
2. Or, "Immortal Self".M.S.
3. The Āyah of Qur'ān which expresses the exquisite act of kindness on the part of Love to which Man answers in the affirmative "yes." Therefore the Ma'refah, the Gnostic knowledge, the faith in monotheism is engrained in all men before their creation. M.S.

our All-Merciful God. Most Certainly in Judgment Day God will reproach those who did not believe in the Divine Unity of God the Most High. The Qur'ān, for instance, states "***Did We*** (*Lord*) ***not, with you all humans*** (*descendants of Adam*), ***stipulate the covenant to not worship Satan, for*** (*Satan*) ***is your declared and obvious enemy?***"[1]

It is precisely for this reason that his Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) once stated: "*In the territory of Arafāt confess your sins! Renew your pre-existential (the forgotten) Pledge with all-Glorious God, His Oneness.*"[2]

◘ STAYING IN ARAFĀT THROUGH AFTERNOON

Now a question arises as to why staying in Arafāt from the midday until the sunset is necessary. It is not easy to answer this question. However, we have some firsthand reports from the time of the Prophet of God (s.w.a.), one of them narrates as follows: a group of Jews visited the last Prophet of God (s.w.a.). One of the most knowledgeable people among them inquired his Holiness: "What is the reason for which staying in Arafāt through the afternoon is compulsory?" His Holiness the Messenger of God (s.w.a.) answered: "*The afternoon is the time of the day in which the Prophet Adam transgressed the rules of God (he committed the first transgression).Then God the Most Glorious made incumbent upon my Muslim Community to stay in Arafāt to beseech His forgiveness In a place He considers the best (Arafāt), and in exchange He rewarded Paradise for them. And at the sunset pilgrim leave the place ('Arafāt) because God revealed some (merciful) divine words upon Adam, afterwards accepted*

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 36 Yā Sīn, 60.
2. Nūrī Ṭabarsī, Mirzā Ḥusaīn, Mustadrik ul-Vasā'il, Vol.10, p. 172.

his repentance, because in truth He is all Merciful, Caring, Affectionate.[1]

■ THE RITUALS OF DAY OF ARAFĀT

On this day, it is appropriate that the mystic pilgrim perform twelve Rak'ats of recommended Ṣalāt, and in each Ṣalāt recite the Ṣūrah Ḥamd[2], Ayat al Kursī[3], and the Ṣūrah al-Ikhlāṣ and after the end of the Ṣalāt, recite the Qur'ān as much as possible. Then, in absolute poverty and wretchedness before God the pilgrim humbly falls in prostration (Sajdah) and invokes the recitation of ṣubḥāna man labasa'l-izzah" [4] and asks Lord the Merciful to fulfill whatever the pilgrim aspires or wishes for.

Certainly, in order that God's guest not present him or herself empty-handed at the threshold of the Beloved, what an appropriate gesture for the Pilgrim, in all sincerity of heart and soul, to recite the three invocations: Alḥamdulillah, Ṣubḥānallāh, and La ilaha illa Allāh, the Ṣūrah Tawhīd, [1] the Ṣūrah Al Qadr[2], Ayat al Kursī, and Salawāt (the Blessings) upon Muḥammad and his Immaculate direct Progenies, one hundred times, each.

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[1] Al Hurr al-Āmilī, Muḥammad Ḥasan, Vasā'il al-Shīa , Vol.10, The Book of Ḥajj, Section 19, H .8.

[2] The opening Ṣūrah of the Holy Qur'ān, and the first that is recited as the opening of every Salāt (be it compulsory or recommended). NT.

[3] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah, 255.

[4] This duā, formulated by Imām as-Sādeq (s.m.a.), translated for the first time is recorded in Mafātīh al-Jinān as follows "*Celestial and Pure is the Lord Who is Glorified with the Investiture of His own Glory and Might. Celestial and Pure is the Lord who with His Grandeur bestows sheer generosity upon humans. Celestial and Pure is the Lord the One for Whom any Glorification is not fulfilled but for Him only. Celestial and Pure is the Lord [Who] is in possession of the Absolute Might and Generosity. O' My Lord! (I implore you), for the awe of Your Throne that is fixed on the Sublime Promises (which are the Hidden Secrets of Your Wisdom), for the Ultimate Misericordia which is Your Book (Which is the Essence of the Tawhīd and Divine wisdom), I implore You O Lord! For Your Own Great Names (Unpronounceable Absolute Name), for Your Completed and Fulfilled Words (which are the Apostles and Imāms, s.m.a.) Who have reached the Perfection and Truthfulness and Godly Justice. I beseech You (I implore You)! To bestow firstly Your Everlasting Blessings upon Muḥammad and His Holy Behest, then fulfill my aspirations and prayers to You only.* M.S.

The pilgrim's personal invocations—duās and meditations—according to his Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) must be respectfully accompanied by devotional humility, meekness in behavior, and constant mindfulness of Who the pilgrim is standing in front of, and " how" and for "what" he or she is performing these invocations and prayers.[3]

THE TERRITORY OF ARAFAT

A reporter tells us that once His Holiness Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) asked him (the reporter):

> *"Do you know why the Ḥājjī (the Pilgrim) in the state of Iḥrām, wrapped in the garb of Iḥrām, must go to Arafāt[4], and afterward, from Arafāt go back to Makkah again and perform the Ṭawāf around the Sacred House of Allāh?"*[5]

Since the reporter was unable to answer the question, His Holiness Imām expounded: "*Because Arafāt is outside the Sacred Mosque, God's guest must get out of the Sacred Ḥaram, and, in Arafāt* (away from sacred Ḥaram), *must beg, must repent so intensely that he or she will ultimately be worthy to perceive Ḥaram, and, having attained the highest aptitude*

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1. Qur'ān Ṣūrah 112 Tawhīd (Ikhlās), the Unity. M.S.
2. Qur'ān Ṣūrah 97, the chapter on Al-Qadr (The Night of Grandeur, of Destiny). M.S.
3. Murāqibat, p. 392.
4. The Territory of Arafāt is outside of the holy Circumscribed Zone of the Ḥaram (Great Sacred Mosque in Makkah). M.S.
5. Ibid. Al-Kāfī ,vol. 5 , p. 462

and level of perception, then go back to Ḥaram."

Therefore, the pilgrim in Arafāt—be it night or day, but especially on the Day of Arafāt (the ninth day of Dhi-l Ḥajjah)—ceaselessly and persistently is immersed in divine devotion and eulogy to the Lord, until he or she makes him or herself capable of God, until he or she be granted Leave and be graced to re-access the Ḥaram (Sacred Mosque) again.

One obligatory ritual of the Day of Arafāt ('Day of knowledge') is staying and sojourning in the territory of Arafāt from exactly midday to exactly sunset. The pilgrim, the reverent seeker of knowledge, should be cautious not to miss these prayers. He or she should also not forget to keep his or her co-religious brothers and sisters in his or her prayers. And in these prayers, the pilgrim must pay special attention to the Reappearance of the Imām al-Mahdī so that—by His Holiness' Patronage and Favor—he or she will be placed in the Pavilion God has assigned to those who accede to the Majestic Nearness to all-Glorious God (Mugharibīn). Amen.

Certainly, it is incumbent on those who "perceive" the Day of Arafāt to have a bona fide belief in God's Mercy and Misericordia, and not to wish anything but God in the Sacred Mosque, in Arafāt and on the Day of 'Arafāt. Asking for anything but God is unworthy to these stages of high Spirituality.

■ THE MOUNT OF MERCY (JABA`L AL RAḤMAH)

Once the pilgrim sojourns in Arafāt before midday, it is appropriate to ascend the Mount of Mercy (Jabal ar-Raḥmah). In the afternoon, the pilgrim can stay on the left side of the Mount facing the Qiblah, meditatively recite the invocation of the Master of Martyrs His Holiness Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.), as he himself did in this very same sacred location.

■ THE PRESENCE OF HIS HOLINESS, HOLDER OF THE WILĀYAT IN ARAFĀT

The Persona of His Holiness Imām-i Zamān (s.w.a.), throughout the rituals of Ḥajj, is in the company of the pilgrims at every moment; his glorious Presence[1] in both the past and the present time manifest unto the seeker's broken, yet desirous spirit filled with love. Not only the Imām Himself, but most of his closest companions and trainees hasten to visit and comfort the enamored pilgrims of the Sacred House of God. If there were a perceiving "eye", and a sympathetic[2] heart in love, sorrow, and nostalgia, it would "see" and "feel" that the pilgrims of God are in the company of that grand beloved Imām. They learn of his fatherly tenderness and love, particularly on the Day of 'Arafāt, where in the span of half of a day, all Muslims in multitudes are present with their souls yearning for God.

Considering the limitation of time and location—as it is an exceptional opportunity to be present in Arafāt and to be accompanied by the Sublime Beloved, it is suggested that at the first break of the dawn in 'Arafāt, the pilgrim meditatively recite the Ziārah of his Forefather Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.). He beseeches vehemently not to be disreputed in God's view by not "meeting" His Holiness Imām Zamān (s.m.a.) at the sunset the culminating hour of the pilgrimage when all the pilgrims hastily leave Arafāt. It must not to be forgotten that in this short period of time and space, we are co-present with His Holiness; we breathe the same air that His Holiness does; we are physically present but not far from the Awaited Imām. He is here. We all have to strive to finish the day (God willing) by encountering His Holiness (May we be his ransom). In fact, there have been pilgrims and devotees who experienced the presence of his person, and finished the Day of Arafāt having seen or encountered him by sunset.

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[1] In the sense of Praenstia Realis. M.S.

[2] We bring to the reader's attention the other meaning of sympathetic in the sense of "pathos". M.S.

Even for a brief moment in Arafāt we hope to have a one-to-one encounter with His Holiness the last living conclusive Proof of God and rejoice in the felicity and divine complaisance of that majestic moment. Amen.

■ ONE STATEMENT BY IMĀM AS SAJJĀD (S.M.A.)

Zuharī, one of the Imām as-Sajjād's adepts, reported that His Holiness once said:

> "On the ninth and tenth day when crowds of pilgrims gathered in the land of 'Arafāt, the Lord proudly communicates with His Angels 'O' My Angels! *See my servants/creatures. These are pilgrims who have journeyed from near and faraway lands, and faced difficulties hitherto; they all have on the same garb of Iḥrām; they abstained from leisure in life; they passed sleepless nights lying over the sand in the land of Masha'r and, with faces covered by sand, they are showing Me their absolute nullity and abjectness. Now I do decree the Leave for you my Angels, to see their inmost secrets.*'" It is here in Arafāt that the Angels, with the Lord's permission, see and come to know the hidden secrets of the heart of the faithful believers in the Divine Unity of Allāh.
>
> In that very instant in which Angels of God—with their celestial eyes—see the heart of pilgrims of the House of God, they notice that some people have darkened hearts aflame,

and from these hearts arises a vivid black smoke. "***The fire God hath kindled which doth mount to the Hearts***."[1] God Himself has explained for the Angels that these are men who spread falsities against the Messenger, claiming that he preached by his own personal initiative; they are the ones who separate Qur'ān from his Holy Behest ('Itrat).[2]

On the other hand, Angels "see" also others among them whose hearts are enlightened and translucent. As these are pure, sincere, faithful believers in the Words of God's Revelation, they are obedient to Almighty God and His beloved Messenger; these people do not differentiate between the Qur'ān and 'Itrat. They firmly believe that the very being of the Prophet of God is the trustworthy recipient of the Revelations; they firmly believe that His Holiness made absolutely no pronouncement to convey authority upon himself. The Messenger of God in the matters concerning the Divine Conveyance of Truth, of Vicegerency, Imāmhood, Leadership and all other issues alike, fulfilled only the Divine Commandment. Every deed His Holiness accomplished was God's Revelation. These fervent believers, with their sincere, unadulterated faith in heart and soul, have devoutly and without respite accepted all the fundamentals of the religion and subsidiary principals of Islam to which they practice accordingly, and give their assent with their tongue as well as with their hearts."

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1. Qur'ān, Şūrah 104 al-Humadah (The Slanderer), 6 - 7.
2. Holy Ahl al-Baīt and Holy Imāms (s.m.a.). M.S.

From Imām as Sajjād's statement Verbatim to Zuharī, we can deduce:

1. The true faithful believer is the one who is admitted into the divine Audience of the Ahl al-Baīt's Wilāyat.
2. Wilāyat is the very Essence and secret of the Ḥajj which only the faithful believer can reach. People with darkened hearts have no access to it.
3. The enlightened hearts belong to those who seek the Truth in the Divine Path of Wilāyat.
4. Indeed, God demonstrates His Mercy and Forgiveness to humans-His servants, and to Angles His Proud He has (for Humans). It is this servant of God who himself engaged with the fire of Ignorance. Indeed, we deserve what we deserve!
5. This classification of Darkened hearts and Enlightened hearts concerns only the Messenger's Ummah and those Muslims who have the privilege to enter the Sacred Territory. All-Glorious God forbids others to enter it.
6. The honest believer attends as a true Devotee/Human Being in Arafāt and Minā.
7. The Lord takes pride in these true faithful believers.
8. These Devotees are superior in rank to Angels of God.
9. This eventful observance of the pilgrims by the Angels takes place year after year, and not one year occurs without it taking place.
10. Those pilgrims who perform only the Single Ḥajj (Ḥajj Mufradah)[1] are in the Lord's view as well.
11. The Angels of God do not always penitrate the hidden secrets of Man's soul.

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[1] The Ḥajj Mufradah is the Briefer Ḥajj, without proceeding to Arafāt and Mina, performed during the Month of Ḥajj. M.S.

12. The one who has not perceived the very Secret of Ḥajj —Wilāyat— in truth has no faith in the Messenger of Allāh.

■ MASHA'R AL-ḤARAM

This territory is within the Circumscribed Zone of the Holy Ḥaram. For anyone who experienced the "encounter" with the Ninth Day and "perceived" it correctly and fully, it is appropriate to camp overnight at the "Forecourt" of the Sacred Mosque, which is the plain of Masha'r al-Ḥaram. In this plain, the faithful pilgrim arms himself or herself by collecting forty nine stones or pebbles for the Tenth Day, which is the day of battle with the Shaītān, the rejected one, the detested one. Let not this grand and powerful night ever pass in sleep or negligence.

In its darkness, one must cleanse the darkness of the heart and ardently, feverishly desire the Nearness to God. In the Devine Revelation it is mentioned: "***When you march from Arafāt remember God near the Holy Monument***".[1] Pondering upon this blessed Āyah we realize that in Arafāt we use inward reflection to intensely remember God more than anything else. We should not forget the Holy Imām As-Ṣādiq's guidance: "*The Heart is God's Ḥaram* (Sacred Territory). *In God's Ḥaram do not allow entrance to anyone but God.*"[2]

The Heart is the House of God, a dead grave make it not.
May you lend it to the owner of this House.

Indeed, the faithful Devotee must be equipped with an "ingathered spirit" before marching to confront the inner or outer enemy, so that she or he will not ever be taken by surprise. "***Against them make ready your***

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah, 198.

[2] Allāmah Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, Vol. 70, p. 27.

strength to the utmost of your power."[1]

Once midnight passes, everyone must stay in the territory of Masha'r. This is the place and time of "diligent understanding". Here intelligence works side by side with diligence. In this sacred plain, the enemy must be fully discerned, and one must then prepare him or herself to confront it with inner strength and vigor. Jamarāt is the Monument where Shaīṭān the Rejected resides. This location is the same place of confrontation where Abraham, Ḥājar and Ismā'īl flung stones in the face of the enemy. There are three different spots where Shaītān, the Accursed one must be defeated; the pilgrim has to gather at least seven stones or pebbles for each spot.

Why seven? Perhaps each of the seven pebbles we aim and strike with our inner strength and vigor represent a shot to each of the seven body parts most under the influence of the Ego, i.e. the eyes, ears, tongue, stomach, hands, feet and the organ of sexual desire. In this location, we learn how to adopt and properly use these body organs, which are the Lord's goods entrusted to us. In this sacred location we ask God the High: "*O' Lord! With your Halāl make me needless of your Ḥaram, and by obeying You make me not disobey You.*"[2] Amen.

■ THE NIGHT OF FEAST OF SACRIFICE (QURBĀN)

One of the most esteemed rituals for the night before the Day of Sacrifice (which is also the Day of Feast) is the recitation of a duā of and for the Abi Abdullāh Ḥusayn Ibn 'Alī (s.m.a.). Its spiritual attainment is the forgiveness of past and future sins, and earnestly seeking the Contentment of God-Truth, Whose own Glory glorifies Him.

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 8 (The Accessions), 60.

[2] Ḥarām an adjective here, not the place as in prior discussions, and it is defined as any evil initiative – be it as an "action" or "intention" forbidden by God the High; if committed, it is punishable by God the High. Opposite of Ḥalāl (lit. any initiative – be it "action" or "intention" declared as Permitted by all-Mighty God). M.S.

▪ MINĀ

With the sunrise of the tenth day we immediately exit the plain of Muḥassir[1] and enter the Minā territory. The first part of the morning of the Day of Qurbānī (sacrifice), we usually have time to enter our stationary tents. Then we arise again to perform the day's compulsory rituals.

At sunrise, it is time to recite the prayer of Nudbah[2] and to concentrate intensely on His Holiness' sublime Presence, on the Holder of Wilāyat, the Last Divine Deputy-Imām of God on earth (s.w.a.). With this moving incantation of reciprocal Love, the sojourn in Masha`r ends, and the territory of Minā begins.

Indeed, at the very beginning of the day of Feast, before going to the slaughter location and throwing stones and pebbles at Shaīṭān the rejected, one must reaffirm his or her solemn promise and fidelity to the Holy Imām, and re-shake his hands. Here Tawwalā (Love and Goodness) takes precedence over the Tabarā (the reprobation and rejection of vice and wickedness).[3]

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[1] Muḥassar is a territory(between the two valleys) located between Mina and Masha'r in which the Abraha's army with his "soldiers-people of the Elephant " were seized by the God's chastisement and remained in anguish and regret to reach Makkah and to destroy Ka'ba.

[2] One of the most powerful and stimulating duās about and for His Holiness the Imām Zamān (s.m.a.). M.S.

[3] Tawwallā: the Love of the Good, of the Holy Prophet and his Holy Ahl al-Baīt; inversely

The land of Minā is the land of "the fulfilled wishes" and not the land—as it has been suggested—"of" wishes. In this revered territory, you by now must have accomplished your aspirations, as led by your Godly inspirations; otherwise you should return to perform the Ḥajj again, as you have not yet reached the very essence of Love.

Minā is the land of opportunity to find your true "I" with inward reflection about the various states of your "Self". It is unbecoming of this stage of Spirituality to, when socializing with companions within the caravan, boast of one's achievements and speak with vanity of one's family, social status, or neighborhood in which one lives. It is reported that His Holiness Imām as-Sajjād (s.m.a.) advised someone: "*After you have fulfilled the Ḥajj 's rituals, if you want to remember your ancestors and speak of them—as it is their veritable right to be commemorated—it is better to engage yourself with your peers discussing the God of your fathers, discussing Tawhīd (the real Islam), the Messenger of God (s.w.a.) and his Prophetic Mission, as well as Wilāyat and Imāmhood's Mission, and the Immaculate Imāms (s.m.a.).*"

We should be motivated to discuss the Sacred Precepts of Islam and continue to seek self-knowledge, self–realization, and mystic wisdom, all converged in one effort in getting closer to the Lord.

▪ THE DAY OF THE FEAST OF SACRIFICE

The tenth Day of Dhi-l Ḥajjah is famed as Yawm An-Nahr (Day of Slaughter of an animal)[1], or Day of Qurbānī (sacrificial gift). This day is the day of Divine Grace and Bounty (General and collective Amnesty

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Tabarā means the rejection, reprobation, abomination and Renunciation of Evil, Vice, and wickedness. M.S.

[1] To offer oneself up at Minā in the Great Feast Day, a purely spiritual ceremony. M.S.

from God). At the end of this Day, it is appropriate that the pilgrim of God "take" the Holy divinely inspired Imāms and Ahl al-Baīt—who are the solely possessors of the Divine Reputation at Lord's Court—as mediums to God, and whisper quietly and earnestly in acknowledgment of one's desperation, powerlessness, and need: *"O' my masters! O' my Beloveds! With all heavy burdens of sins, ashamed am I, to turn my face, obfuscated as it is by sinfulness, toward Almighty God. And yet, I beseech all of you, O' you whom I love! With halo of the Divine-Royal light radiating from your holy faces, intercede for my fallen face. The Lord Himself accepted all of you as the sole authority for Intercession."*

■ THE RITUALS IN MINĀ

There are three obligatory (wājib) rituals in Minā:

1. Throwing the stones at the Last Jamarāt in line, where the Great Shaīṭān "resides." This act symbolizes the absolute rejection of and hatred for the enemy of God, and whosoever invites one anywhere but to him.
2. The Qurbānī, the slaughter of a sheep, cow, or camel, which symbolizes the absolute Trust in God; the necessary self-sacrifice and devoted tribute in the path toward the Beloved and...
3. Ḥalq (to shave the head), which symbolizes complete dedication to Almighty God; affectionate abandonment of the Self, and total commitment of the whole of our Being to Him only.

■ RAMĀ JAMARĀT

The literal meaning of Ramā Jamarāt is simply "throwing the stones", but the hidden meaning is the rejection and expulsion of the enemy of

God. In an external sense, one beats down the Shaītān, while inwardly, one struggles with all one's might, exercising one's innermost feelings and strength to abhor and defeat everything ungodly. This includes the enemies of God who mischievously present non-Gods to others as idols; the enemies by their own initiative dexterously craft the vilifying idols (physicals or metaphysical) and worship them, encouraging others to do the same.

O' Dear Lord! I implore You to help me – your servant – not to be one of those evildoers. Help me to not fabricate idols, to not worship them nor call others to worship them. Amen.

The Prophet Adam (s.m.a.) is the first Human Being—it is reported in a rawāyat—who cast stones at Shaīṭān the rejected. Then it was the Prophet Abraham (s.m.a.)[1] then the Last Apostle of the Apostles of God. Therefore, in performing this ritual of the Ḥajj, we find our actions in unison with those of two great idol-breakers—Abraham and Muḥammad—two great Imāms and the chiefs of all Apostles, and in unison with all the Holy Preservers of the Religion, i.e. the Immaculate Imāms (May the infinite blessing of God be upon them).

▪ QURBĀNĪ (The Sacrifice)

"***Shave not your heads until your offering reaches its place.***"[2] Yes, indeed, before you abandon your true "I" to God the High, you must first have offered everything, everything you have in your possession. Concerning the meat and the blood of the offering, the Holy Qur'ān states: "(*These offerings*) ***never doth reach God in their meat nor their***

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[1] Vasā'il Al Shīa, vol.6, Section 1, under Ramā Jamarah.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 Baqarah, 196.

blood, but it is the piety on your part that reaches God."[1] The offering, like any other form of prayer, has an exoteric and an esoteric meaning. The outer meaning of this "prayer" is that the pilgrim—following certain parameters—makes his or her offering to Almighty God by slaughtering a sheep. A devoted pilgrim should know that the true form of the offering (Qurbānī) is neither the meat nor the blood. In the Pre-Islamic Era of Ignorance, the meat was left hanging on the walls of the Ka'ba. Such exhibition is inconsequential on the Path of Approachment to God the High. The value of this offering is "***the piety on your part that reaches God.***" The offering (the divine gift to God) bears a truth called Taghwā, which is solely what approaches the Lord.

■ THE OFFERING AND ABRAHAM'S HIGH RESOLVE

One of the more weighty examples of determination and the highest form of Piety traces back to a memorable interaction that occurred between the resolute man of Tawhīd, the Prophet Abraham (Friend of the Merciful) and God. This interaction is expressed and explained in an astonishing description by the Eighth Imām, His Holiness Imām 'Alī ar-Riḍā (s.m.a.), reported by Faḍl Ibn Shaẓan and documented by one of the greatest exegetes, the Shaīkh Ṣadūq as follows:

"Once Abraham had been commanded to immolate a ram in lieu of his beloved son, Ismā'īl, Abraham pleaded earnestly to follow God's previous injunction to slaughter Ismā'īl; he wished that God Almighty would "not" have sent a ram to replace his son, so that he, Abraham, the father, in his own heart could feel the brutal pain of a father worthy to

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 22 al-Hajj, 37.

receive the highest Spiritual Attainment for being patient, for forbearing the excruciating tragedy. Following Abraham's plea, the All-Merciful God sent dawn His Revelation upon Abraham as follows, stating: 'O' ABRAHAM! FROM AMONG ALL MY PEOPLE OF ALL MY CREATION, WHO YOU DO LOVE THE MOST?'

Abraham replied: *'O' Lord! The most beloved among Your people of all Your Creation, to me is your beloved Muḥammad.'*

God the High: *'DO YOU LOVE HIM MORE THAN YOU LOVE YOURSELF?'*

Abraham: *'I do love him more than my own soul.'*

God the High: *'DO YOU LOVE HIS SON MORE THAN YOU YOU'RE YOUR OWN SON?'*

Abraham: *'Yes! I do love his son more than mine.'*

God the High: *'IS IT MORE PAINFUL FOR YOU TO SEE THE SLAUGHTERED HEAD OF HIS SON, AT THE HAND OF MY AND HIS MERCILESS ENEMIES, THAN TO SLAUGHTER YOURSELF YOUR OWN SON IN OBEDIENCE TO ME?'*

Abraham: *'O' Lord! The slaughtered head of his son Ḥusayn is more painful to me.'*

God: *'O' ABRAHAM! SOME AMONGST THE PEOPLE WHO CLAIM TO BE PART OF THE UMMAH OF MUḤAMMAD MY LAST APOTLE, WILL UNJUSTLY AND*

VICIOUSLY DECAPITATE MUḤAMMAD'S SON, ḤUSAYN, LIKE A SHEEP. BECAUSE OF IT, I SHALL INCUR UPON THEM MY WRATH.'

Hearing this prophecy, Abraham started to weep in anguish and inconsolable sorrow for Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a). Then the Lord sent the following Revelation unto Abraham: *'O' ABRAHAM! I CONSIDER YOUR BEREAVEMENT AND TEARS OVER MUḤAMMAD'S SON AS A RANSOM FOR THE GRIEF AND PAIN YOU WOULD HAVE FELT FOR YOUR SON WHOM YOU WOULD HAVE BEHEADED BY YOUR OWN HANDS. I TAKE THE OBLIGATION ON MYSELF TO BESTOW UPON YOU THE GREATEST SPRITUAL OF MERIT UPON EVERY FAITHFUL BELIEVER WHO TAKES UPON THEMSELVES SYMPATHETIC AND COMPASSIONATE SORROW AND GRIEVES FOR ḤUSAYN."*

Certainly, this is the hidden meaning of the Lord's Āyah in the Qur'ān: "***And We ransomed [Abraham] with the Greatest Sacrifice.***"[1]

The point is that certain Godly men and women on the Path to Nearness to the sublime Court of Allāh have never been content with anything but God; and they courageously—with exemplary coherence—marched onward to the Ultimate Threshold, as Imām Ḥusayn did (s.m.a.).

Indeed, it requires an Abrahamic wisdom and unerring Insight to fully understand that it does not suffice to sacrifice only a sheep. The one who is sincere in heart and in mind, and readily sacrifices his most beloved wealth, that is, Ismā'īl, to God the High, God Himself, in return, accepts from him a greater, more complete Sacrifice than Ismā'īl, who is

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[1] Ṣadūq, Khiṣāl, p. 6869-, section H 79. The Ṣūrah 37 Al-Sa'fat (The Rangers), 107 ("And We ransomed Ismā'īl with a Great Sacrifice [who is Ḥusaīn]").

Ḥusayn (s.m.a.).[1]

And then, you, dear pilgrim! Look once more over this Ḥadīth — which is a rare and supernatural Gift of God to Mankind; and fathom its true meaning; it is a magnificent and divine gift from the Eighth Holy Imām for all Muslims, and for the persons in divine consuming amorous and reciprocal love with the Sublime Court of Ḥusayn immolated in Sacrifice (May our souls be his ransom).

■ THE NIGHT OF 11TH AND 12TH OF DHI AL-ḤAJJAH

In the pre-Islamic era, the polytheists were also performing the Ḥajj, but with this difference: after ending their rituals in Minā, they socialized and boasted extravagantly about their ancestors, their ethnicities and touted the honors of their tribes and clans (our tribe is so and so, our clan is so and so). However, the devoted pilgrims of Allāh, the adept of the Monotheistic Religion of God, after the end of the devotional rituals in Minā (the night of 11th and 12th) they make good use of their time: spend their time ceaselessly remembering God, The Truth, The Glorious. "[*At night stay in Minā*] ***and when ye have completed your rites Remember God in more Intense remembrance than you remember your fathers.***"[2]

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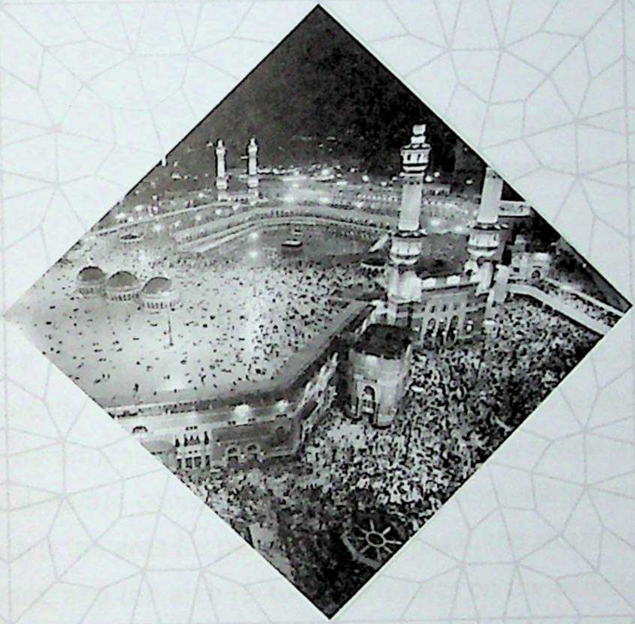
[1] With mentioning this exalted Ḥadīth of Imām ar- (s.m.a.) now is a bit clearer the mystery why on the night and on the Day of 'Arafāt, as well as its subsequent Day of Feast of Sacrifice, it is recommended the Ziārah (the visitation in heart and in mind) of Imām Ḥusaīn (s.m.a.)

[2] Qur'ān, Şūrah 2 al-Baqarah, 200.



THE MOSQUES OF THE HONORABLE MAKKAH

▪ 1. THE KA'BA

The most magnificent and most esteemed Mosque and place of Worship on earth is "the Honorable Ka'ba" the characteristics of which we have briefly mentioned in previous pages.

▪ 2. THE MASJID AL-ḤARĂM (THE GREAT SACRED MOSQUE)

After the Ka'ba, the great Sacred Mosque is the most venerated place of worship. We have earlier touched on the Great Sacred Mosque (Masjid al- Ḥarām), and in this chapter, we will briefly review it further.

Masjid al-Ḥarām consists of the courtyard immediately around the Ka'ba, which is the area for performing the Ṭawāf, the arcades all around the courtyard, and the architectural enclosures on the periphery of the courtyard.

After the honorable Prophet left his earthly life, the Muslims were building their houses around and in the proximity of the Ka'ba itself. At the time of the Caliphs, construction was prohibited in order to gradually increase the space of the Sacred Mosque. Today it spreads about 180,000 square meters, allowing for occupancy of half a million worshipers. This Mosque has sixty two different gates and entrances, big and small. In these days, the Ḥaram is undergoing expansion remodeling and expansion.

■ 3. THE KHĪF MOSQUE

Since this mosque is located higher in altitude than the Ka'ba location, it is named Khīf, which literally means "higher in altitude". As mentioned in the duā of Samat[1], the Epiphany of God unto Abraham, The Intimate friend of God, occurred in this Mosque. His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) stated, "*Perform prayers in the Khīf Mosque because it is the Minā's Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque.*"[2]

It is recommended that if you can perform your prayers there, do it, since one thousand apostles of God have performed their prayers there. In addition, it is good to recite the incantations ṣubḥān'Allāh and alḥamdulillāh one hundred times, each.

■ 4-.THE TAN'ĪM MOSQUE

This mosque is the closest mosque to the sacred Circumscribed Zone of the Ḥaram; it is located on the road from Madīnah. Pilgrims who, at times, decide to perform the Mufradah Ḥajj (the Single Ḥajj) must enter the state of Iḥrām in this Mosque.

■ 5. THE MOSQUE OF INSHIQĀQ AL-QAMAR

In the ninth year of the Prophet's Mission, a few Makkahn heathens, including Abū Jahl (nicknamed The Ignorant) challenged the Messenger of God to bring forth a miracle, on the basis of a false justification that the said miracle would implement the Apostleship of the Messenger of Allāh.

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[1] In the Book of Mafātīh al-Jinān.

[2] Kulaīnī, Kāfī, Vol.4, p. 519.

If Muḥammad, they insisted, is truly the Messenger of God then he must make the moon split in half. The Holy Messenger therefore requested Almighty God to tear the moon asunder. The Miracle occurred on the fourteenth night of the Holy Month of Dhi al-Ḥajjah. Fourteen people witnessed the unfolding event, standing and watching in the proximity of the Ka'ba in the area of Ḥijr-i Ismā'īl.

The following Āyah was revealed regarding this extraordinary grand event: "***Nigh hath come the Hour of occurring the Miracle*** (*or of Judgment Day*) ***and hath been rent asunder the moon.***"[1]

■ 6. THE JINN'S MOSQUE (THE AL-HARĀTH MOSQUE)

This mosque is near the Hujūn bridge which is now within the expanded city of Makkah. It is also called al-Ḥaras. It is the reminder of a particular incident when a group of Jinn[2] heard the Prophet, savoringly, utter a delightful Āyah of the Holy Qur'ān in prayer. By hearing the beauty, the sublimity of the words, immediately and without hesitation each Jinn embraced Islam. Soon after, in this very location, the Ṣūrah Al-Jinn was reveled upon the Messenger as follows: "[*O' Messenger*] ***Say: 'It has been revealed unto me that a party of Jinn hath heard the Qur'ān and said: 'Verily, we have heard a Recital so wonderful,*** [*and which*] ***Guideth unto the Right Path, wherefore believe we in it.***"[3]

■ 7. THE SHAJARAH MOSQUE

This mosque is not the one on the road from outside Madīnah to Makkah, which is the "Place of Appointment" for pilgrims, wherein they

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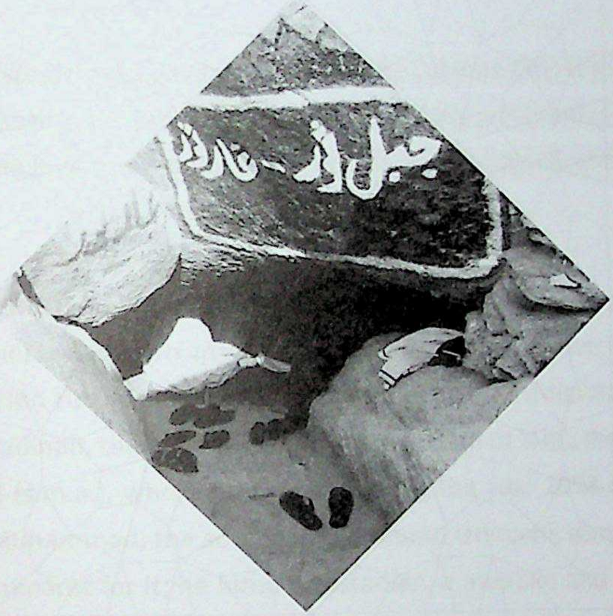
1. Ṣūrah 54, Al-Qamar (The Moon), 2.
2. Jinn are the ethereal, "incorporeal" beings, not being a body. M.S.
3. Qur'ān 72, Al-Jinn.

enter the state of Iḥrām. This mosque instead is located near the Hujun Bridge, close to the Jinn Mosque. It is one of the oldest Mosque in Makkah. According to historians, the Messenger of God (s.w.a.) performed prayer in this mosque and still breathes the effects of his holiness' presence. It is said that in this location occurred a miracle: the Prophet of God had called a tree to dislocate its position and the tree moved from its place toward the Prophet (s.w.a.).

◘ 8.THE AL-IJĀBA MOSQUE

This mosque is located a bit south of today's Muabida square on the road that leads to Great Mosque. It is said that also in this location the Prophet of God (s.w.a.) performed his prayer. During the day he was sojourning in the Hara' cave and at night, descending the Mountain of Light (Jabal al-Nūr) he was stopping in this location to worship God the Most High, the Ultimate Reality of worship.



جبل ثور - غار ثور

THE SACRED LOCATIONS IN THE EXALTED CITY OF MAKKAH

Every single place, every quarter in the Sublime City of Makkah is "Ḥaram"; it is sacrosanct and revered. We will briefly review a few more of the locations that possess special significance.

■ 1. THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE MESSENGER OF GOD

His Holiness was born in the Valley of Abī Ṭālib, in the house of Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf Saqafī. After the Prophet's Ḥijrah (Migration) from Makah to Madinah, the house was in the possession of 'Aqīl, the brother of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), who then sold it. During the year 1098 of Ḥijrah, the Sulṭān Muḥammad, the son of Sulṭān Murād Uthmanī, remodeled it and built a minār̄et for it; he hired a custodian, a muezzin and an Imām to lead the congregational canonical prayers.

Today, a public library of the new city of Makkah stands in the birthplace of the Last Prophet of God—the Mercy upon Mankind.

■ 2. DĀR AL-ARQAM

This location is the first abode in which, at the onset of Islam, the Messenger of God and his closest adepts and companions held secret gatherings. Therein they were educated by the Prophet (s.w.a.), and dedicated themselves to prayers and worshipping God the Glorious. This dwelling place was, at that time, outside of the "Great Sacred Mosque", by the mount of Ṣafā. Nowadays it is a part of the square in front of the Mounts of Ṣafā and Marwa.

■ 3. JABAL AL-NŪR (LIGHT) AND THE HIRĀ CAVE

This Mountain of Light is located north of Makkah and adjacent to Minā. On the left side of this mountain, 160 meters from its summit, there is a cave named Hirā. The cave Hirā is the location of the most unequaled devotional prayers of the last Messenger of Allāh (s.w.a.), and where for the first time, God' Revelation descended unto His beloved Messenger, who at the time was forty years old.

It was the enlightening and sublimely beautiful Words of the Ṣūrah Al- 'Alaq[1] which first descended upon the Messenger of God.

This cave on this mountain was the Prophet's own choice of sanctuary, as it was secluded, quiet, and safely away from the public. It lies exactly in the direction of the Ka'ba, and overlooked the Great Sacred Mosque (Ḥaram). His Holiness, away from the spurious public's eyes and in peace of mind ascended the spiritual Path approaching God the High.

It is reported that at the end of every year, the Prophet of God went to the cave of Hirā, and dedicated one entire month to devotion and servitude to All-Mighty God.

■ 4. THE CAVE OF THAWR (Cow)

The mountain of Thawr is located three kilometers south of Makkah, and south of the territory of Musfilah. Near its summit is the cave called

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[1] Ṣūrah 96, Al- Alaq (The Clot).

Thawr.

It is significant because it protected the Messenger from the heathen polytheists, who had determined to lethally strike him, each tribe choosing one of its own to be a part of the assassination squad. They united one night, and set off toward the house of the Prophet to kill him, and all he represented, as he lay in bed. However, the Commander of the faithful believers, Amīr al-Mu'minīn Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), endangering his own life, laid in his place that night as the Messenger left the house[1]. For three days and nights the Messenger found refuge in this very cave of Thawr. The following Āyah s in Qur'ān are the reminder of the cave of Thawr and its events:

> "***If you*** *[people of Makkah, including Quraish and the Prophet's relatives]* ***did not help*** *[the Prophet],* ***indeed God*** *[instead]* ***helped him. When those who disbelieved expelled him,*** *[and when the Prophet and his companion]* ***were in the cave, one of them*** *[the Prophet]* ***said to his companion: 'thou be frightened not, verily God is with us.' Then*** *[at that immediate moment]* ***God sent tranquility and quiet down upon His Messenger, and strengthened him with corps*** *[host of Angels, though]* ***ye saw them not***".[2]

It is appropriate to visit this cave during the spiritual journey of the Ḥajj, and to be thankful to Allāh the Glorious Who protected His own Beloved Messenger from the vicious and conspiring enemy.

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[1] This night is a famous night. Named as the Laylatul Mabit (the Sleepless Night).

[2] Şūrah 9, Al-Tawbah (The Repentance), 40.

5. SHI'B ABĪ ṬĀLIB

This valley is located at the slope of the Abū Qubāys' mountain. When the Quraish could not convince Abi Ṭālib—the chief of Quraish (the Prophet's paternal uncle)—to forsake his loyal protection of the Messenger, they convinced all other tribes to enter a unified socio-economic boycott against the Prophet's tribe, Banī Hāshim. In the seventh year of the prophetic Mission the chiefs of the Makkah tribes signed a written pact of sanctions that were to be effective until the tribe Banī Hāshim surrendered the Messenger to the Quraish. The whole tribe of Banī Hāshim was confined in this valley, Shi'b Abī Ṭālib. In this sacred location, the Messenger of God would sometimes change his location of sleep during the night for the sake of security. The Prophet (s.w.a.) and his companions were under intense pressure with these heavy sanctions. Sometimes, the babies' poignant cry of hunger were echoing in the valley; men and women, old and young were eating one single date a day. This was the everyday life. During this prolonged time of many endured hardships (lasting almost three years) Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) and Ḥamzah (the Master of Martyrs) took turns guarding the Prophet. At this time, the unconditional protection and care provided by Abī Ṭālib (the honorable Imām 'Alī's father) was also at its height.

Finally, after three harsh years of suffering, the Quraīsh, in ignominy, unilaterally withdrew the boycott. The Banī Hāshim emerged victorious, and its people returned to normal life.

6. THE CEMETERY OF ABĪ ṬĀLIB

This cemetery is located on the mountain slope in the valley near the Jinn's mosque, by today's Hujūn Bridge. It is the burial place of many magnanimous men and women of God, such as Abī Ṭālib (the honorable father of Imām ‘Alī (s.m.a.), and the generous, noble spouse of the Messenger of Allāh (Khadījah).

In the tenth year of the prophetic Mission, the Messenger of God, under intense pressure from the Quraīsh and their blockade, found more great grief added to his already saddened soul as his tribe survived in the Valley of Abū Ṭālib. In the span of few months, two great companions (Khadījah and Abū Ṭālib) of the Prophet took their leave of this world and hastened towards the Eternal Universe. Therefore this particular year is titled as The Year of Sorrow. The bodies of both the departed companions of The Year of Sorrow have been entombed in the cemetery of Jannat ul- ‘Alā (the Highest Paradise).

The prophet’s forefathers, such as ‘Abd-i Manāf, ‘Abd-ul Muṭṭalib, as well as several other men of Rank, prominent ‘Ulamā and Godly Men such as Shahīd Thāni (d.966 /1558) have been buried in this cemetery as well. May God elevate their honor and Rank in Paradise.

▪ 7. THE CEMETERY OF FAKH’S MARTYRS

Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn Ḥasan ibn Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib (s.m.a.) in the year 169 of Ḥijrah led a revolt against the Hadi, the Abbasid Caliph of the time in this location “Fakh.” Ḥusayn with three hundred of his Shia followers and his close relatives faced the enemy’s army here in this territory. He and his several companions were martyred. This mausoleum is the location of their death-martyrdom. The martyrs from the genealogy of Imām Ḥasan (s.m.a.) are confirmed and mentioned with reverence by all the Holy Immaculate Imāms (may the everlasting peace and blessing of God be upon them all). [1]

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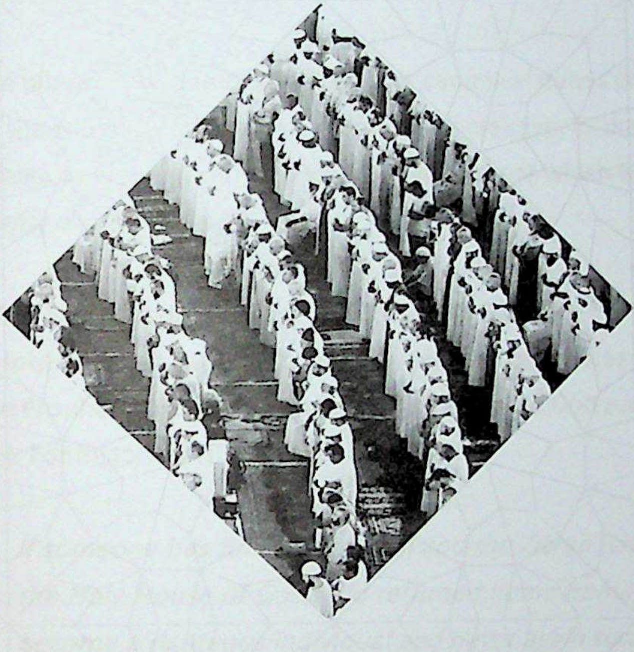
[1] Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Bihār al-Anwar (the Ocean of Light), Vol.48, p. 164.

His Holiness the Ninth Imām said of this cemetery: *"After Karbala there is no other killing field greater than the Fakhs to Us* [the Ahl al-Baīt]."



THE EFFECTS OF THE ḤAJJ

The pilgrimage of the Ḥajj, like other canonical duties prescribed by the Islamic Law (Shar'īa), possesses a creative, formative effects as well as bountiful spiritual attainment which we will briefly explore.

■ 1. THE SIGN OF ḤAJJ BEING ACCEPTED BY GOD

The Holy Imāms (s.m.a.) reported several references that the Honorable Prophet (s.w.a.) made regarding the signs of God's acceptance of the Ḥajj. For instance, His Holiness once said:

> *If someone has fulfilled the Ḥajj and the Zīārah (visitation) of the Holy House of God, and returned home from it, and had become a righteous individual and never again succumbed to sins and never again walked on the wrong path, this, then, is the sign that his or her pilgrimage has been accepted by God. If [on the contrary], after the pilgrimage he or she has recklessly and complacently inclined to commit the same misdeeds and follow evil passions, this, then, is the sign that his or her Ḥajj is null.*

This statement implies a greater secret of the Ḥajj that applies to other forms of prayer and worship as well. For instance, the Holy Qur'ān stats about the canonical daily prayers (Ṣalāt) that, "***Verily the Ṣalāt*** [*has a meaning which*] ***restrains*** [*the intention of doing*] ***the filthy and evil*** [*deeds*]."[1]

Although the canonical prayers, per se, are a legislatively established matter, the inner meaning of them is a "creative" one.

If someone intends to act, that given action presupposes multifold ontological and psychological aspects. The acting person first understands the action, then evaluates it; then comes to "form" willpower, passion and intention as the operative powers causing him or her to perform that specific action. The person consequently behaves accordingly— good or bad. This process is a part of the creative faculty of man. The inner essence of Ṣalāt, for the devotee of God has an amorous creative role which leads the operative powers (motivation, will, passion, propensity and intention) toward fully positive values. The daily Ṣalāt –as a reciprocal direct dialogue with Glorious God regulates and ontologically adjusts the devotee to be uninterested in evil and prone to goodness.

Therefore, the essence of the Ṣalāt prayer's "creative" role has a cardinal function which is to adjust the psycho-spiritual inclinations and faculties toward ethical and moral truthfulness, as well as towards religious laws and virtuosity. Thus, the essence of daily prayer is a recurrent creative creation.

The inner meaning of the Ḥajj, like the creative essence of Prayer, plays a determining role in various cognitive faculties of Man. It is, for example, an impediment against the burgeoning intentions of

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1. Ṣūrah 29, Al-Ankabūt (The Spider),45.

rage, disobedience, and sin. This, certainly, is the essence of the Ḥajj; encouraging Man to perform his or her religious duties and follow its precepts, and to submissively walk on the mystical path toward the Glorious God. On the spectrum of each individual's spiritual progress, the Ḥajj raises the pilgrim to his or her true spiritual self-realization, to his or her most sublime heights of excellence.

▪ 2.ḤAJJ AS A CREATIVE FACTOR OF HUMAN TRUTH

Abī Baṣīr, one of the adepts of the Fifth Imām, His Holiness Imām Bāqir (s.m.a.), lost both eyes and became totally blind. He relates:

> "In the same year that I was honored to go to Makkah for the Ḥajj, I was also graced to be in the sublime presence of the Holy Imām Muḥammad Ibn-i 'Alī al-Bāqir (s.m.a.). With the sensory faculties – beyond the faculty of sight – I felt crowds of pilgrims that had the privilege to perform the Ḥajj to the Holy House of Allāh. I said, 'There are so many pilgrims, so much screaming, so many lamentations and so much groaning!'
>
> His Holiness replied, Abī Baṣīr! Come forward!' I reverently went forward a bit. His Holiness gently laid his holy hands over my eyes. At once, I saw a vast, flat land with a huge multitude of creatures resembling beasts; some as apes, others like swine. But, among them were a few faithful believers beaming like shining stars in the middle of darkness.
>
> His Holiness, reflecting upon this scene, said: '*But there are only few pilgrims, amongst so much screaming, so many lamentations and so much groaning.*' Then His Holiness

> gracefully re-posed his hand over Abī Baṣīr's eyes and Abī Baṣīr returned to his previous state. Then His Holiness said, "*Abī Baṣīr! If We* (the Holy Imāms) *would do the same to others as We did do unto you and make them perceive the secrets of pilgrims and comprehend what is occurring in the plain of Arafāt , then it is possible that – not having the ability to bear it- they will exaggerate about who We are. Know! We are only the servants of God the All-High.*"
>
> "*We never feel supercilious in worshipping God, nor do we get wearied by worshipping God.*"[1]

The Ḥajj contains divine mysteries and secretes that transform the ontological Ego and behavioral faculties from the false form of animal individuality, into a fully human consciousness. If the pilgrim of the House of God truly becomes a Ḥājjī and becomes imbued with the outward as well as ontological, inward consciousness and behavior, then the Truth "forms"[2] him or her.

This is the same Truth Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) alluding to the following statement about the hypocrite: "***Verily,** [his or her] **external appearance resembles a human but** [his or her] **heart is animalisstic.***"[3]

The heart is that same Godly ethereal, subtle spirit[4] that permeates the Man's Credos, ethics, motivations and human affections. Without a shadow of a doubt, the heart of the one who chooses senseless beliefs, corruptive desires and aberrant deeds or unethical behavior is not bestowed with humanity, even though apparently the person has the Semblance of a human being. It should be noted that uncovering the secrets solely depends upon the person's ability to keep and preserve those secrets.

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[1] Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Manāqib, Vol.4, p. 184.

[2] In the ontological as well as psychological sense. M.S.

[3] The description of Hypocrites, Imām Ali(s.m.a.), The Nahj al-Balāqah, speech no. 194, in which his holiness quotes the Āyah of Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 58 al-Mujādilah (She Who Pleaded), 19. M.S.

[4] In the sense of spissitudo spiritualis. M.S.

To whom it has been taught the secrets of the (Universal) Truth
They sealed his/her mouth.

Therefore, you my brother! My sister! If the "curtains" have been set aside for you and you perceive the secrets, do not disclose it—for this by itself, is the Mercy of God upon you which it makes your life expand.

■ 3. THE KEY ROLE OF WILĀYAT IN THE PATH TO HUMAN EXCELLENCE

The Rawāyat states that the Valī is the Reason and Divine Guide for the generic outlines of the Religion. While the canonical prayers, Ḥajj, Jihad, etc. are the integral precepts of the Religion, the Valī is the Reason, Executioner, Exegete and Preserver of their definitive outlines as well as guidelines of practical conduct[1]. Valī is the direct Representative of God. His Holiness the Messenger of God said: "*I will depart from amongst you but I leave behind two precious Gems, the Book of God and my Behest ('Itrat). Until you grasp unto these two, ever will you be aberrant and in perdition. You must not allow these two, ever, to be disunited and apart from you until you meet me on the Fountain of Kawthar* (in Paradise)."[2]

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[1] In the sense of legislative magisterum of the Qur'ān .M.S.

[2] Bihbahāni, Misbāh al Hidāyah, p.81, referred from Ghayat al- Marām, p. 211.

And in a statement in Imām 'Alī's will (s.m.a.) we read: "*Keep these two* (Qur'ān and the 'Itrat) *standing up and keep you these luminous torches lightened* (your affairs will be fulfilled through these two)." Therefore, it is self-evident that whosoever abandons, willingly or not, one of these or both, can neither reach the essence of the Ḥajj nor of any other form of prayer, and will not elevate to the level of human excellence. Furthermore, such a person would be nurturing the false expectation of becoming mature by the teachings of God, and may pretend to be a completed human being. Conversely the pilgrim with a true vision of Ḥajj ascends so high that narrated by Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) that one of his companions asked him:

> 'What is the greatest sin?' And His Holiness replied: '*The most sinful person is the one who stops by and sojourns in Arafāt and Muzdalifah and performs the Sa'y (strive) between Ṣafā and Marwah, then performs the Ṭawāf around the Ka'ba and its relative two Rak'ats of Ṣalāt and in his or her heart believes that God does not take him or her into Eternal Salvation, then that person is sized by the most grave sin.*"[1]

At the end, a reminder: The Words of God demonstrates that all along the process of Ḥajj, in every moment, there are Signs directly from God for you: "***In it there are signs clear.***"[2] In this journey to God, there are several enlightening Signs that lead all toward God, the Supreme Truth.

Therefore, with the perceiving eye of the mystic Heart we must " see"

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1. Narrated by Imām as-Ṣādiq (S.m.a.)
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 (Al-i Imran), 97.

more attentively the Ḥajar al-Aswad, the House of God, Ka'ba, Maqām Ibrāhīm (the Place, Station, of Abraham), 'Arafāt, Minā, Mash'ar al-Ḥaram, and beyond....

The hearts and souls of so many human beings in love flutter their wings earnestly "taking off from the earth" in flight toward this land, is another explicit sign of God, Who answered Abraham's noble prayer when he raised his arms to heaven and beseeched: "*[O' Lord!]* ***Make Thou the hearts of some of the people yearn unto my offspring.***"[1]

Certainly, this Āyah complements the previous one, underlining the process of the Ḥajj with the Wilāyat of Ahl al-Baīt, emphasizing that Ḥajj and Wilāyat co-exist one through the other in an indissoluble unity; they are complementarily bound together, connecting Makkah directly to Madīnah, the Ka'ba to the cemetery of Baqī in Madīnah. In 'Arafāt, the visitation in heart and in mind (Zīārah) of the Imām-i Zamān, side by side with the devotional rituals, the renewal of the solemn Pledge and Promise to his sublime Holiness and the uncompromising Rejection of unbelievers are all intertwined and imbued together.

◼ THE GENERAL GUIDELINES

The homo viator, the voyager of the Beloved's District, should bear the following points in mind:

1. Correct fulfillment of the Rituals utterly depends upon the Taqlīd (reference point of emulation).
2. It is necessary for pilgrims to correct their pronunciation, in Arabic, of the recital of the ḥamd for their Ṣalāts. The requisite of correct Ṣalāt and Circumambulation (Ṭawāf) depends on correct Arabic

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 14 Ibrahim, 37.

pronunciation of the ḥamd and ṣūrah (the very first opening Ṣūrah of the Holy Qur'ān and the very first Āyah of the starting point of any Ṣalāt, compulsory or recommended).

3. For the daily prayers during the trip, where we arrive, we follow the local direction of the Qiblah.
4. It is recommended by Shar'īa Law that, while performing the Ṣalāt, with every change of body position both hands be raised to the level of the ears. However, at the congregational prayers with Sunni followers, the hands must be raised only at the starting point of the Ṣalāt and not during the Ṣalāt, as Sunnis do not consider this act as a recommended gesture in their Ṣalāt.
5. Since the theologians of the Sunni school of thought consider it compulsory to perform the daily prayers at their exact prescribed time, they do not perform the midday and the afternoon Ṣalāts at the same time, and neither the sunset (Maghrib) or night (Ashā). The Shia 'Ulamā of the Shar'īa Law consider it permissible to perform the noon prayer and afternoon prayers together.[1]The same role is valid for the sunset and night prayer.
6. In the case that the pilgrim is not punctual and does not join the congregational prayer in time and misses the first Raka't already in progress, when the leading Imām of the prayer sits and recites the Tashahud, the pilgrim must not sit in half position, as Sunni followers consider this gesture as a nullification of the prayer altogether.
7. At the Friday congregational prayer in Madīnah, the leading

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[1] Seyed Muḥammad Kāzim Yazdī, Urvatāt al-Wusqā, p. 173 -174.

Imām of the prayer sometimes recites the blessed Ṣūrah Hal Atā[1] during the first Rak'at, and the Ṣūrah Hāmim sajdah[2]during the second Raka't of the same Ṣalāt. As the latter is accompanied by a compulsory prostration (Sajdah), when hearing the Āyah of Sajdah, we must do the Sajdah like others, and then continue the usual course of the Ṣalāt.

8. In the congregational prayer the lines of the devotees must be "attached" (no space between the devotees standing in line) during the prayer; especially sisters should bear in mind that their line must be "attached" to the lines of the rest of devotees during the Ṣalāt.
9. In the mosques in Madīnah and Makkah, the pilgrims should abstain from performing the additional recommended prayers before noon, because the Sunnis consider it unlawful.
10. Ladies must take leave from their husband for the votive offerings (naẓr) that they sometimes have with God for any reason; and so, "before" entering the state of Iḥrām (for example in the Shajarah Mosque in Madīnah), it becomes necessary for them to have this specific permission.
11. Men must be circumcised, as it is a general rule of the Shar'īa Law for men to be circumcised. It is a requisite for any man who wants to perform the rituals of Ḥajj.
12. Prior to Ḥajj, men must not cut their hair from the first day of the month of Dhi al-Ḥajjah. However they are allowed to shorten

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1. Ṣūrah Hal Atā, 76 (named also as Dahr (Time) or Insān (Human Being). This Ṣūrah is about the perfect human being who are Imām Ali, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Husayn (peace be upon them). As we know, eighteen Āyahs are about them.
2. Ṣūrah, 32 al-Sajdah (the Prostration).

their mustache and other excessive hair on parts of their body other than head.

13. It is recommended to do the Qusl (the complete ritual bath of the body), which is specifically intended for entering the state of Iḥrām.
14. One should "first" perform the compulsory Ṣalāt specifically intended for entering the state of Iḥrām. Or at least two, four or six Rak'at of Nāfilah (superogatory additional Ṣalāt), as his eminency Ayatollah Shobeyri consider this compulsory.
15. When you are in the sacred Mosque (Ḥaram In Makkah)and/or being in the state of Iḥrām, or while performing the Ṭawāf or entering the Ḥaram, you must be careful not to step on locusts that are present all around the Ka'ba and in the courtyard.
16. In the Ḥaram in Makkah one must abstain from taking soil, stones and pebbles out of the Ḥaram.
17. Although it is recommended to delay the daily prayer (sunset and night Ṣalāts) until the pilgrims reach the Sacred territory of Masha'r (Masha'r al-Ḥarām), it is in fact safer to perform them before leaving Arafāt so that they may not become "defaulted" (ghazā) during the trip to Masha'r al-Ḥarām.
18. In Minā, men give priority to shaving the head (halq) rather than just shortening the nails or hair, even if is not one's first time performing the Ḥajj.
19. It is recommended that whoever shaves the head must first start from the right side of the head and pronounce the name of Allāh, and then recite the following invocation: "*Oh Our Lord! Bestow unto me all the comforting light on Doomsday (Judgment Day)….*"

20. It is reported that when the pilgrim returns home, as long as the effect of the "shaved head" is visible and obvious[1], it is as if the servant of Allāh is still in the sacred Circumscribed Zone of the Ḥaram.
21. The pilgrim should perform a complete Ṭawāf for all fellow Muslims, as if he or she is their deputy, so that when the pilgrim claims, "I performed the Ṭawāf for you" the pilgrim truthfully would have fulfilled the promise that had been made to them.
22. On the Day of Tarwīah, try to enter the state of Iḥrām necessary to the Grand Ḥajj in the proximity of the Ka'ba, especially as Ayatollah Khoie' was of the opinion that the pilgrim must enter the state of Iḥrām within the boundary of the Old City of Makkah, located between the Ka'ba and Jinn's mosque, near the Hojun bridge. Therefore, the pilgrim[2] must NOT pass beyond this area before entering the state of Iḥrām.

AND INFINITE PEACE AND BLESSING OF ALLĀH BE UPON THE PROPHET MUḤAMMAD AND HIS DIVINE BEHESTS

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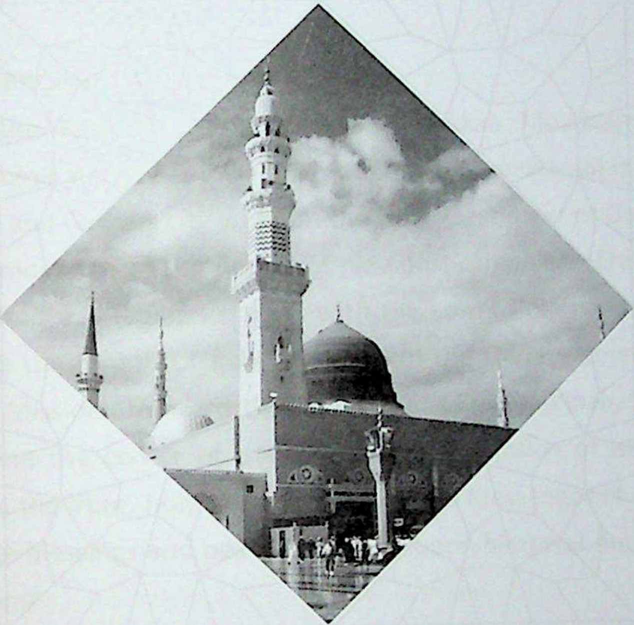
[1] In the sense that the hair after the head is shaved, are not grown as before the Ḥajj. M.S.

[2] Those pilgrims who choose Ayatullah Khu'ī as their Marja' Taqlīd. M.S.



THE PROPHET'S CITY

■ THE PROPHET'S CITY

After the Exalted City of Makkah (Makkah Moa`zzamah), the divinely Illuminated City of Madinah (Madinah Munawarah) is the most venerated and famous city wherein the Holy Messenger of God (s.w.a.) resided almost half of the period of his Apostleship. The Era of Ḥijrah from Makkah to Madinah started with the Lord's Command upon His Prophet in the month of Rabī ul-Awwal in the thirteenth year of the Prophetic Mission. Henceforth, the Prophet's City, Madinah, flourished and became the center of the far-reaching expansion of Islam. And ultimately, the Pure, holy body of the Beloved Messenger of God (May the infinite blessings and peace of God be upon him) was buried in this blessed land.

Amīr al Mu'minīn Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) spent almost thirty five years of his magnanimous life in this City and the surrounding areas. Fāṭimah (s.m.a.) passed almost ten years of her honorable life in this City also; and at the end, by the holy hand of God's Walī (Vicegerent), 'Alī al-Murtiḍā (s.m.a.), Her Holiness was, in the darkness of a night, buried in this pure, heavenly land. The two Holy Imāms of God, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.), lived all but five years of their life in this city as well. Most of Holy Imāms of Ahl al-Baīt lived their life in this Sacred City.

This blessed land has embraced the divine, Immaculate body of Fāṭimah az-Zahrā the radiant, as well as the blessed bodies of four Holy Imāms of God (s.m.a).

Madīnah is where His Holiness the Ever-Living Imām of Time, Imām Zamān, comes and goes (may our soul be his ransom). In this land any enamored pilgrim whose soul, in humility and obeisance, yearns to fly towards Allāh the High. This location was and forever will be in view of selected godly souls. Therefore it must be safeguarded and each soul must take the sublime value of this majestic and mighty land to heart.

In brief, Madīnah is important because the Prophet emigrated to and resided in this city, and because the Holy Ahl al-Baīt (s.m.a.) lived their lives here as well.

About the magnanimity of this City, it suffices to cite one statement addressed by the Holy Messenger to the Celestial Court of God, when he was expelled from the Honorable City of Makkah. "*O' my Lord! As You expatriated me from the City I love the most, do reside me in a land You love the most.*" The All-Glorious God answered this supplication at once, and His Holiness resided then in the City of Madīnah. The name of this city in the pre-Islamic Era of Ignorance was Yathrib. But the Holy Messenger disliked the name and changed it to Madīnah. Later, Muslims named it Madīnat un-Nabī (the Apostle's City), and Madīnah Munawarah (the divinely Illuminated City).

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MAKKAH AND MADĪNAH

The Fifth Holy Imām al-Bāqir (s.m.a.) stated:

"*Initiate [your Ḥajj and the devotional Visitation, 'Ziarah'] from Makkah and end it with Us (Holy Ahl al-Baīt). Whoever does not have the* *capacity [of performing the Ḥajj and Our visitation, Ziarah, in Madinah, from anywhere one may reside] send directly the salutation [Salaam] to us, because [your Salutation] reaches Us."*

A reporter narrates: I asked the Holy Imām al Jawad (s.m.a.), "Should I first come to Madinah to pay my visitation (Ziarah), or first perform the Ḥajj in Holy Makkah (and then visit Madinah)?

"*First Makkah and then Madinah because [this way your journey] has more spiritual Attainment.*"

TO EXALT MADĪNAH

A group of adepts of the Holy Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) once had the privilege to visit His Holiness. The Imām (s.m.a.) brought to their attention that "*Some people are very clever in their earthly affairs. But you, being God-fearing, instead, during your sojourn and visit in Madīnah, be scrupulously keen and diligent in the affairs that will be noticed on your Doomsday* (Judgment Day that awaits you)."[1]

Therefore, let us take to heart the grandeur of these days and nights in which we are 'with' the holy recurrent Presentia of the Messenger of God and of the Ahl al-Baīt. Let us earnestly ask God to help us to exalt them. It is self-evident that the Ahl al-Baīt themselves are the best and solemn Medium to All-Glorious God (in this world and the next).

THE RITUALS IN MADĪNAH

According to Shar'īa Law, the following rituals are recommended (but not compulsory):

1. The Ghusl (the complete bath of the body) is specific for entering

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[1] Vasā'il a- Shīa, Vol.2, Section 9, Abwāb al-Mazār.

the city of Madīnah; the Prophet's Mosque; and for the visitation of the Prophet; the Imām's graves in the Baqi cemetary.

2. Sojourn in Madīnah.
3. Three uninterrupted days of fasting are specific for the fulfillment of wishes. It is better to be fasting in Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
4. Performing the Ṣalāt at Wednesday night at the proximity of the Towbah column (Abū lababah's column); Thursday performing the Ṣalāt close to the column right on the direction of Tawbah Column; and the night and the day of Friday close to the column in front of the Prophet's Miḥrāb.
5. Reciting the entire Qur'ān specially done inside the Prophet's Mosque.
6. Give alms, for according to Rawāyat, one Dirham of Alms equals ten thousand Dirhams given in other places.
7. Performing Ṣalāt, and specially inside the Prophet's mosque, for every Rak'at of Ṣalāt inside the Prophet's mosque equals one thousand Rak'at performed in other places except in sacred Mosque in Makkah.[1] The best place to perform the Ṣalāts inside the Prophet's mosque is the space between pulpit and his holy tomb.
8. Visiting the Qubā Mosque and performing Ṣalāt inside. It has been narrated from the Prophet himself (s.w.a.) that whoever does the Wuzu (ablution) and goes to Qubā mosque and perform two Rak'ats of Prayer, it is as if attaining the spiritual reward of one Umrah (lesser Ḥajj performable at any time of year with

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[1] Kulaīnī, Kāfī, vol.4, p. 566.

fewer rituals).[1]

9. The visitation and performing the Ṣalāt at the proximity of the place of Umm-i Ibrāhīm, inside the Fazīḥ mosque, the martyrs' graves and the Aḥzāb (fatḥih) Mosque.[2]

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[1] Abū Zaīd, Umar Ibn Shabh, The History of Illuminated Madīnah (Tareekh Al- Madīnah Munawarah),Vol.1, p. 41.

[2] Kulaīnī, Muḥammad Ibn Ya'qūb, Kāfī, vol.4., p. 560.

[illegible] the Prophet's Mosque. [illegible]

9. The visitation and performing the Salat in the proximity of the place of Umm-i Ibrahim, inside the [illegible] the martyrs' graves and the [illegible] Mosque [illegible]

[illegible] Wednesday, Thursday [illegible]

[illegible] the Prophet's column [illegible] Thursday [illegible] right on the direction of [illegible] the day of Friday close to the [illegible]

[illegible] one Dirham of alms [illegible] proper place.

[illegible] inside the Prophet's Mosque, for [illegible] the Prophet's Mosque equals one [illegible] other places except in [illegible] to perform the Salat inside [illegible]

[illegible] performing Salat inside. It has been narrated [illegible]

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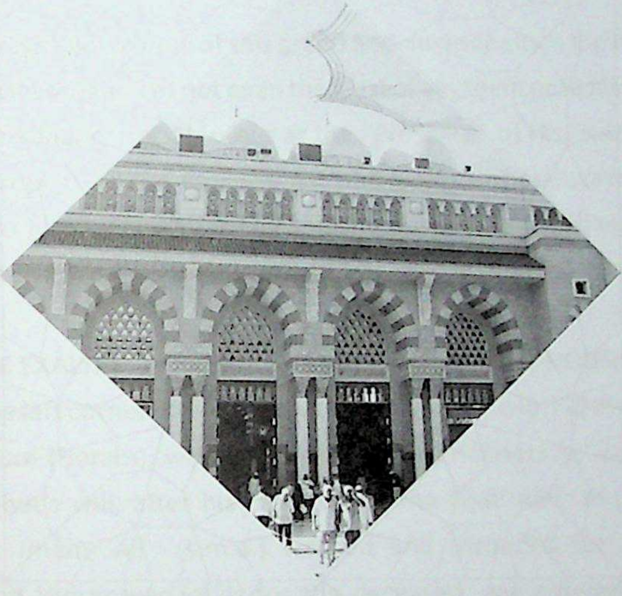
1. Abu Zaid, Umar Abd Allah, The History of [illegible], p. 41.
2. Kulaini, Muhammad ibn Yaqub, [illegible], vol.4, p. [illegible]



EXALTED PROPHETIC ḤARAM (MAUSELEUM)

The gravitational pole of this grand and majestic city is the Holy Grave of God's Messenger. Let not even the least of negligent or remiss behavior – be it personal or social- occur at the "Presence" of His Holiness.[1] It is he the Prophet—"***The Mercy upon mankind***"[2] –whose powerful force attracts to himself the yearning souls in nostalgia and ardent hearts in love from every corner of this planet.

■ THE EXALTED GRAVE OF THE PROPHET AND HIS HOUSE

On the left corner of the Prophet's Mosque one will find the Prophet's Mausoleum (Ḥaram), where the grave of His Holiness is. According to the Prophet's will, after his martyrdom, the Chief Amīr of the faithful believers Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) washed and shrouded his holy body, performed the prayer(Ṣalāt) for the deceased, and entered the grave himself to ultimately lay the Honorable Messenger in it. It all happened in this exalted location, which was one of the small temporary chambers of his house. Over the years, the two folks of Thaqīfah who were friends[3] were in succession buried, apparently, in the vicinity of the Prophet's grave in the direction of his blessed feet.

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[1] In the sense of the prophetic celestial presence, with that delightful scent of sanctity. The audience of his glorious majesty. M.S.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 21 al-Anbiyā (The Prophets), 107.

[3] Abū Bakr and Umar .M.S.

■ THE PRESCRIBED RITUALS FOR THE PROPHET'S ZĪĀRAH (VISITATION)

1. The ablution (Wuzu) and the Qusl (complete ritual wash of the whole body) specifically intended for this visitation;
2. Wearing the clean, candid clothing;
3. Being perfumed with soft delightful scent;
4. Proceeding, humbly, and with the most obsequious homage toward the Ḥaram with self-possession and serenity of the soul;
5. Asking His Holiness the leave to enter his Ḥaram;
6. Feeling honored (to "be co-present" with the Prophet (s.w.a.) inside his Ḥaram;
7. Invoking, ceaselessly, Allāh-u Akbar, one hundred times;
8. Performing two Raka`ts of Ṣalāt of Courteous, goodly and godly greetings (tahīyat) for having been invited, singled out to access the Sacred Mosque of the Prophet;
9. Visitation (Ziārah) of the Holy Prophet in an appropriate manner and discipline;
10. Performing two Rak'ats of the Ṣalāt of the Visitation;
11. Invoking to the limit of one's capacity, the Divine Blessing and Salutation (salawāt) unto the Prophet's sacred Soul.

■ ENTERING THE PROPHET'S ḤARAM (MAUSELEUM)

It is best that the pilgrim access the Celestial Presentia of Allāh's Messenger in the Mosque through Gabriel's Gate. Anytime His Holiness the Angel Gabriel, God's Trustee, descended from heaven to the place famed as the "Gabriel's Place of Descent"[1]—this actual Gate of the Mosque—before entering the Prophet's dwelling, he asked for leave of access and then, and only then, was admitted 'to meet' with the Holy Celestial Presence of the Allāh's Messenger .

■ THE PROPHET'S ḤARAM AND PERCEIVING HIS HOLY PRESENTIA

We will now proceed to cite a few themes regarding the Prophetic Mission (Risālat) as well as the Wilāyat.

The Holy Qur'ān states: "***O' you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses until leave is given you.***"[2]

The Honorable Prophet is the Perfect Man. There is no death for him. He is perpetually alive, the Ever-Present, of the Eternal Witness (Shahīd). "***And the Messenger is a witness over*** [*you all*]."[3]

The pilgrim must continuously bear in mind that being in the Prophet's city of Madīnah, he or she is in the prophetic bountiful banquet; and therefore should always be vigilant and not lose his or her keenness in "perceiving" inwardly experiencing his Sublime real Presence.

Even during the lifetime of the Honorable Prophet—who himself is the Full Reflective Mirror(speculum) of the Glorious God—there were people living with him, there were those "present" beside him but indolent or "unaware" of his majestic sanctity. So much so that God Whose Glory glorifies Him mentions in His Qur'ān: "***And thou*** [*O' Our Messenger Muḥammad*] ***see them looking towards thee but they see you***

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[1] In the design provided of the Mosque of the Prophet (s.w.a.), the Gabriel's" Place of Descent" is shown.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 33 al-Aḥzāb (The Confederates), 53.

[3] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 2 al-Baqarah, 143.

not."[1] And thus, the heart's eye ought to be open and ought to envision the very essence of Life itself.

■ PREPARATION TO PERCEIVE THE PROPHET'S SPRITUAL NOURISHMENT

No doubt, without an explicit personal invitation from the Prophet himself (s.w.a.), we would not be a guest in this magnificent spiritual reception, with its Mystical Repast. Now that we are participants, what should we do?

To earn benefit (spiritual attainment) and mystical nourishment from this cognitive experience, let us not engage in any improper conduct in the presence of Prophet of God. If you journeyed thus far to learn, to excogitate the eminent knowledge of God and amorous wisdom, then do not engage yourself in superfluous conversations that annoy His Holiness. "….***Do not seek any familiar talk; verily*** [*such behavior*] ***annoyeth the Prophet but he*** [*forbeareth and*] ***is shy to dismiss you***."[2]

Activities such as overeating, overnight socializingand tarrying senselessly impede the pilgrim to perceive, to feel the pleasure of the Munājāt[3] , the devotional invocations to all-Hearing God.

Of the possible forms of misconducts in this land, the worst is to commit forbidden deeds (social or personal) in the Holy Presentia of the Prophet. Even the minutest of disapproved, unadvised and blameworthy (but not necessarily unlawful) deeds according to Shar'īa Law, ought to

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 7 al-A'rāf (The Elevated Places), 98.
2. Qurān, Ṣūrah 33 al-Aḥzāb (The Confederates), 53.
3. Munājāt is a colloquium that the devotee, steeped in profound, 'reciprocal' dialogue with God, in pensive melancholy and love, is barely expressible even to the most fraternal and external soul. It is the soul's own 'soliloquium' with all-Glorious God. M.S.

be avoided. Let not the Prophet (s.w.a.) ever be annoyed by unethical and/or inappropriate thoughts, intentions and undisciplined conduct.

"***Verily those who annoy*** [*the Honorable Messenger Muḥammad*], ***in truth, annoy God, Who curses them in this world and the Hereafter, and they will be forever far from His Celestial Nearness; He has readied for them a humiliating endless chastisement.***"[1]

Therefore, do not ever waste the time and these golden opportunities with senseless talk. Every single instant must be passed seeking guidance and spiritual growth. "***When you finish dining, then disperse.***"[2]

▪ THE PROPHET'S RECEPTION AND WAKEFUL NIGHTS IN DEVOTION

Sometimes the social gatherings last late into the night, and superfluous chit-chatting here and there do not leave much time to be awake and restful for the last part of the night, and the subsequent sunrise prayer. Going to bed early at night helps one to rise early and well rested, hours before the sunrise, and be near the cemetery of Baqī and in the Prophet's Mosque.

"***Verily, the*** [*dead of*] ***night is the best witness of intense sincerity and purity of heart and straightness in words.***"[3] My brother! My sister! Day and night, with constant adherence of the heart be in perpetual remembrance and praise of Him and cut away every attachment but that to Him. Dedicate yourself wholeheartedly to Him only. Because without separating oneself away from people, the connection with Him is not possible. "***Verily, thou hast during the day prolonged occupation with***

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 33 al-Aḥzāb, 57.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 33 al-Aḥzāb, 53.
3. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 73 al-Muzammil (The Wrapped Up), 6.

manifold engagement."[1] Irksome activities during the day should neither detract nor impede you from constant remembrance and divine praise of God and from the path toward Him (exalted be His praise).

For the one who is the guest of the Prophet of Allāh (s.w.a.) it is impossible to lose the opportunity of being awake—with him Present—in the nocturnal hours before the sunrise. The Divine reception of His Holiness consists of Taḥajjud (nocturnal withdrawal) and being awake to offer supererogatory prayers and invocation-duā until before the sunrise)[2]. Because he invites all, everyone is received. God invites and welcomes His beloved, Prophet Muḥammad (s.w.a.) to be wakeful in the night and to offer the prayers, as shown in the following Āyah: "***And*** [*in a part of*] ***the night forsake sleep for prayers, in addition to*** [*what is incumbent on*] ***thee; Maybe soon that exalteth thee thy God unto a position of All-Glory*** [*as the Great intercessor*].[3] Therefore, the spiritual intention (Nīyah) of the heedful Pilgrim—of the Homo viator—it should not be to avoid Hell, because all who are destitute, mentally impaired and not adult do not enter hell fire. We ought to attempt to be atoned with of Angels' paradisiacal odes at the Gate of Paradise:

> "[*At the gate of Paradise*] ***Salāmun Alaykom Peace be upon you all! You shall be happy; what a comforting gathering provided for you. Enter you this Paradise and abide, forever.***"[4]

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 73 al-Muzammil, 7.
2. A mental talk with All-Merciful God, an inner and personal dialogue of the "self" with God. M.S.
3. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 17 al-Isrā, 79. The Prophet (s.w.a.) whose prayer is granted.
4. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 39 az-Zumar, 73.

Yes indeed, the Angels come with the most alacrity to greet you and divinely (and directly) welcome you into an everlasting Paradise.

■ THE ETERNAL GRACE OF THE ZIĀRAH (VISITATION) TO THE PROPHET

His Holiness the Eighth Imām relates that the Holy Messenger said: *"Whoever visits me during my life time or after my death, in truth visits God the High."*[1] Not visiting the Honorable Prophet is considered a violation of reverential courtesy to His Holiness. Shaīkh Ṭūsī, in his monumental treatise called Taḥzīb quotes a Ḥadīth uttered by Her Holiness the Immaculate Fāṭimah az-Zahrā the radiant (s.m.a.), *"Whoever for three days sends the Salaam unto the Messenger and me, Paradise is [granted to him or her]'*. Then Her Holiness was asked: "This visitation to you and to the Prophet while still alive, may we do it after yours and the Prophet's lifetime as well?" Her Holiness replied, "After (our) lifetime as well." [2]

■ THE PROPHET AS THE BEST INTERCESSOR

The Holy Qur'ān states: "***And those who were unjust to themselves*** [*who sinned*], ***if they had come unto thee*** [*O' Messenger*] ***and sought God's forgiveness and the Apostle*** [*also*] ***asked forgiveness for them, indeed they would have found God Oft-returning and Merciful.***"[3]

In the Prophet's Ḥaram and in his holy Presentia[4], one of the rituals is that Man remembers his or her own heedless acts; he also remembers others who fervently love the Messenger of God, and beseech His Holiness to be an intercessor for him or her as well as for others to the High Divine Court of the Merciful God. Without a shadow of a doubt, God will promptly and positively reply to His Holiness's intercession and request, because of the special favor and rank in heaven he enjoys by God the Oft-returning, as expressed in the Āyah just mentioned.

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[1] Vasā'il Al Shīa Vol. 11, the Section Al-Mazar.

[2] Ibn Qulawayh Kāmil-u Zīyārat, Section II, p.13

[3] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 4 al-Nisā, 64.

[4] The Presentia here could also suggest the redemptive Power – intercessor – bestowed upon the Prophet (s.w.a.) with God's Leave. M.S.

One of the rituals of the Holy sanctuary of the Prophet (s.w.a.) is that, according to the Word of God, visit the Prophet and ask him to be intercessor to God and ask for us His forgiveness. To this topic must be added another fact: it is reported by the Rawāyat that while invoking the Duās try to give priority to pray first for others rather than for yourself. For instance, the Holy Imām Ḥasan (s.m.a.) once narrated that "*I remember one time my mother was awake that before dawn was doing her additional nightly prayers. In her prayers I heard she did not mention neither us (at that time children) nor her husband. In the morning I asked her the reason and she replied: 'First the neighbor and then our own home*".[1]

All of us are aware of our own misdeeds and sins but we do not know anything from others other than good deeds! Furthermore, it has been revealed upon his holiness Moses (s.m.a.): "O' you Moses! Next time you come to do your Monājāt, bring with yourself someone who is lower than you!" His Holiness despite his efforts could not find anyone amongst human

beings to take with him to the Land of the Beloved God. On his way to the Place of worship, he saw in a trash pile the corps of a dog in decomposition half eaten by the worms and with the repellent odor. His holiness taught to himself that "this might be the worst I could find; I take it by the tail and bring it to the Beloved's territory." "Who knows," his Holiness continued to think, "It may well be that Lord loves this more than he loves me!" He changed his mind and did not take it with him. When his Holiness reached the holy place, Lord said: "Did you bring someone with you?" Moses (s.m.a.) told God the story. Then Lord thus spoke: I swear on My own Glory that if you had brought that dog to Me I would have obliterated your name from the book-register of the names of My prophets."[1] The other point is that the one who seeks the intercession to God , he/she must have a good reputation with God, knowing also that although he/she does not have left any good reputation with God, how could he/she be an intercessor praying for others rather than for him/herself?

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[1] Bihār al- Anwār, vol.86, Section III, p.313.

■ THE HOUSE OF FĀṬIMAH (s.m.a.)

"The House of Fāṭimah" (s.m.a.) is located between Gabriel's Gate, the Prophet's Mosque, and the Prophet's house (location of the Prophet's holy grave). Although this "house" is neither big nor wide, it is one of the highest and most revered, awe-inspiring locations in the world. It suffices just to mention that the honorable Prophet himself, the Angel Gabriel, Imām 'Alī , Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (s.m.a.)—who are amongst the most sublime Human Beings on earth never entered this small home without Her Holiness's permission.[2]

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1. Ibn Faḥd Hillī, Uddat ul Dā'ī, p. 218
2. 2.Ibid.

THE REVERENCE OF FĀṬIMA'S HOUSE

With the following points I will attempt to describe the solemn Rank of the House of Fāṭimah (s.m.a.).

1. All the doors be closed, except this door: Anyone who was in possession of a house in the proximity of the Prophet's Mosque had a door to directly access it, but with the Prophet's command, all such doors were blocked off. The only house which was allowed to have a door granting direct access to the Prophet's Mosque was the house of the Immaculate Fāṭimah the radiant the Divinely purified, The Lady of the Worlds (s.m.a.) It is reported that the Prophet's uncle, the honorable 'Abbās, [1] made the following request of His Holiness: "O' Messenger of Allāh, give your permission that just one window of my house remain open to the Prophet's Mosque." His Holiness replied: "*My dear uncle! I have the permission from God that only 'Alī 's house have direct access to the Mosque. Close off even the window of your house that opens to the Mosque.*"[2] This is because only Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) and his Holy Ahlal-Baīt are Immaculate and divinely Infallible. "***Verily, Verily, God intendeth but to keep off from you every kind of uncleanness O' you, people of the house, and purify you with a thorough purification.***"[3]

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[1] The uncles of Holy prophet Muḥammad were Abū Ṭālib, 'Abbās and Ḥamza.

[2] For more information about this topic, see the translated discussion of Ayatullāh Seyyed 'Alī Bihbahānī (may God be pleased with him), where it is discussed that the Prophet (s.w.a.)had closed off all the doors of all the people who had direct access to the Prophet's Mosque, except for 'Alī's. Over this issue all Muslims agree. In the treatise of Gha`yat al Marām, twenty nine different documentations and Ḥadīth from a variety of Muslims, including brethren Sunnis, have been mentioned.

[3] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 33 al-Aḥzāb (The Confederates), 33.

2. The Fāṭimah's house is superior in rank than the Qubā Mosque: At the Prophet's time, when the hypocrites built the Zarār mosque on the outskirts of Madīnah, their actions seemed pious and sincere in intention, but were in fact sly and impure. The Prophet (s.w.a.) confronted them with his own characteristics of exceptional open-mindedness, leniency and condescension. He accepted the invitation to their mosque. As His Holiness was about to go to their mosque, some Āyah descended unto him stating that this kind of mosque must be burned dawn and be completely demolished. All-Merciful God revealed the following Āyah reminding us of the Qubā mosque: "[*In the Qubā Mosque*] ***are men who earnestly love to be purified; and verily God loveth the purified ones.***"[1] Because the Qubā mosque is the place for those who love to achieve spiritual purification, it is loved by God as well. "***Surely a mosque*** (*Qubā mosque*) *found on piety from the very first day deserveth more than you* (***O' Apostle***) *shouldst stand therein* (***for prayers***)."[2]

But, dear reader, pause for a moment! Compare the Qubā mosque with the house of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.). In the Qubā Mosque, the spiritual purification that is rightfully expected to be accomplished by men with several devotional rules and conditions, and over significant time and conditioning, was, at once and instantly fulfilled in advance for the holy members of the house of 'Alī (s.m.a.). The divine Purity, Infallibility, and innoxiousness are inherently granted by God to its Holy Inhabitants (may the Infinite Blessing and Peace of Allāh be upon them). Keep in mind that the celebrated Āyah of Taṭḥīr (one of the scriptural foundation of Islam) ascended unto the Holy Messenger of God in the house of Fāṭimah az-

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 9 al-Tawbah (Repentance), 108.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 9 al-Tawbah (Repentance), 108.

Zahrā and Imām ʻAlī (s.m.a.). Therefore, this blessed house is superior in Rank than the mosque of Qubā itself.

What other house besides the house of Imām ʻAlī (s.m.a.) exists on this planet and could be of higher in Rank and reverence, than the sacred Qubā mosque?

3. The location of martyrdom of Mohsen, son of Fāṭimah az-Zahrā (s.m.a.): What other group of hypocrites do we know of in this world more vile and abominable than that group of armed foes who, in a contemptuous way gathered behind the door of this little sacrosanct house, and burned its door, kicking with such violence that its wall and its doorpost fatally crushed that most Godly beloved innocent Human Being – the beloved daughter of the last Messenger of God – and made her irrevocably lose her six month old unborn child Muḥsin (named by the Prophet himself). Therefore this location is the place of martyrdom of Mohsen (s.m.a). And only because Her Holiness resolutely and fearlessly did protect and was sympathetic to the Master of all faithful believers Amīr Al-Mu'minīn Imām ʻAlī (s.m.a.) in protesting and execrating the first deceptive distorters of Islam.

4. The place of ascension of Four divine Immaculates: Throughout the eras in mankind's history, in what part of this globe do we know of another abode such as this house, wherein have been revealed the Last Words of God to Mankind–among them the Āyah Taṭḥīr? It was only in this blessed house of Fāṭimah and Imām ʻAlī (s.m.a.), wherein its Holy Inhabitants were living their everyday life; the carpet of prayer was always extended over its floor, and wherein lay the sleeping bed of three of the Holy Imāms who are, all, inherently and divinely Pure, Immaculate. This sacred house is the same celestial threshold wherein the distinguished tree of divinely assigned Infallibility and Innocence grew and yielded its Holy Fruits. But, alas! Immediately after the Prophet's departure from this world (may the infinite Blessings of God be upon him), the door of this very house became the ruthless killing tool of his so much beloved daughter Fāṭima az-Zahrā (s.m.a.).

5. The location as the place of Tawallā and Rejection: Near this door... what a location to mournfully meditate and reflect. It must be wondered—why? Why did they burn the door of this house? Where was the manhood of the obtuse witnesses that out of slothful cowardice watched in silence, those weak-of-spirit accomplices of that unpardonable act? Their "hidden associationism", Hypocrisy, surpassed the Apostasy, as "***Verily the hypocrites shall be in the lowest depths of the fire.***"[1]

6. The sacred burial place of Fāṭimah Az-Zahrā (s.m.a.): It may well be that Fāṭimah's grave is at the heart of this very house.

7. The preference of prayers performed in the Fāṭimah's house over the Prophet's Rawza: Yunus Ibn Ya'qub, one of the companions of the Sixth Holy Imām (s.m.a.) asked His Holiness, "Is it better that I perform the Ṣalāt in the house of Fāṭimah or in the Rowzah (the garden of Paradise) of the Mosque of the Messenger of God? His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) advised: "*The Ṣalāt in the house of Fāṭimah is better – May the infinite Blessings and Peace of Allāh be upon her father and her consort and her children.*"[2]

From this compendious Ḥadīth you yourself can envision the answer as to why the reverence of Fāṭimah's house (s.m.a.) has priority over the

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah al-Nisā (The Women), 145.
2. Al- Kāfī , Vol. 4, Section 556, Ḥadīth 13

Rawzah of the Prophet's Mosque; and with what pen and description can one explain this superiority? Who is it that does not know that whoever accepts Fāṭimah (s.m.a.) keeps the unfailing faith in both Imām 'Alī and in the Messenger of God deep in heart as well? And the one who claims to have the love for the Prophet only, how, then, could he or she affirm the Wilāyat of Fāṭimah and Imām 'Alī?

8. The place of worshiping God of the divine Immaculates: The narrator describes that "I personally saw with my own eyes that the Holy Imām Jawād (s.m.a.) every morning was coming to the Prophet's Mosque to pray; and after his worshiping God and subsequent additional prayers, barefoot, he was coming to the house of his holy Mother and after a while his Holiness was starting his Ṣalāt and prayers there as well...[1]

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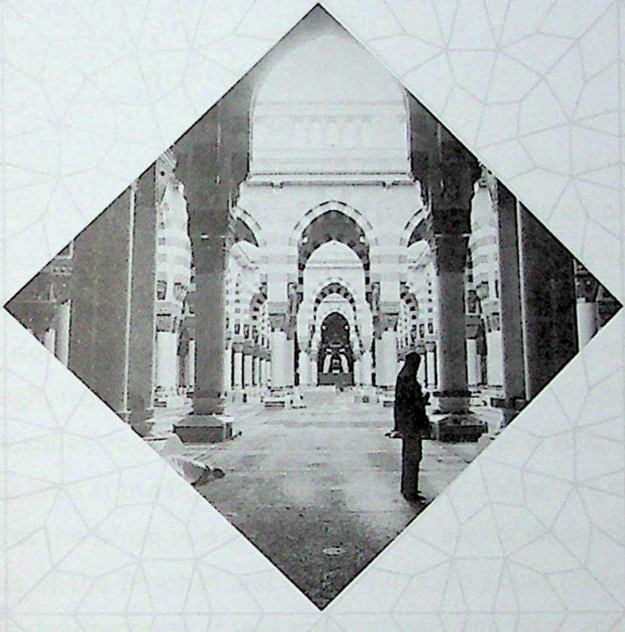
[1] Kāfī V.I, The section of Abī Ja'far, The place of Birth of Abī Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Alī the Second (Imām Jawād) p. 493, Ḥadīth no. 2.



THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE

▪ MASJID AN-NABĪ (s.w.a.)

The Prophet's Mosque is located on the east side of the City of Madīnah. When the Messenger of Allāh (s.w.a.) emigrated from Makkah and entered Madīnah, he resided in the house of Abū Ayūb Anṣārī. The Owners of the land of the Prophet's Mosque—prior to its construction—were two non-adult orphans who dried dates on this piece of property. It was bought from their legal guardian for the price of ten Dinār.

The Mosques' foundation was laid in the first year of Ḥijrah. The total area of the land at the Prophet's time was about 750 square meters; the courtyard of the Mosque was covered with a layer of black pebbles. The holy hands of the Prophet and Imām 'Alī (s.w.a.) built the building; its shape was quadrangular, it was made of mud and brick, and its ceiling was structured with wooden logs of palm trees. Since then, Caliphs, Sulṭāns and other rulers have expanded the Sacred Mosque.

The Ḥadīth states that "one single Ṣalāt performed in the Prophet's Mosque has more spiritual merit and rewards than 10,000 Ṣalāts performed in other locations, except the Great Sacred Mosque (Masjid al-Ḥaram), and the Masjid al Aqsā (the Furthest Mosque' in Palestine), where one Ṣalāt has more merit than 1000 Ṣalāts performed in other places."[1]

Imām 'Alī's Mosque in Kufa grants special prayer value as well, and a single Ṣalāt performed there equates 200 or, in some Rawāyat, 70 Ṣalāts in other places.

The Internal plan of the Mosque is shown at the end of this book. At present time, the actual area of the Prophet's Mosque reaches 10, 000 square meters.

The description of the Prophet's Mosque has been divided into the following five sections:

1. THE MOSQUES' MIHRĀB[2]

Miḥrāb is the place of worship God (exalted be His praise). It literally means the Location of fight, the fight against the inner as well as outer enemy, the menace of own Selves (Nafs) and evils. Before Islam, the person leading the prayers was standing at the higher position, implying the superiority of the leading person before anyone else. But Islam changed the location of the Miḥrāb for the Imām as leader of the Ṣalāt to a lower level from the lines of the devotees showing explicitly that the ascension towards God starts from the humblest level (to worship God), even though the Imām of the prayer is superior than others as the leader of the prayer. Inside the Prophet's Mosque there are several miḥrābs, among them we mention:

A. THE PROPHET'S MIḤRĀB: In the area that lays in the exact direction of the prophet's head in his holy grave, the Prophet's Miḥrāb is located. This particular Miḥrāb possesses exceptional celestial sanctity. The Honorable Messenger was performing his daily canonical prayers – and maybe his recommended supplemental ones as well – in this niche. It is very appropriate , if possible because of the over-crowding, that each pilgrim perform a number of Ṣalāts in this niche and appreciate, reverently, the very same spot where the Holy Prophet (s.w.a.) posed his holy feet and his forehead for his prayers.

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[1] Ṣadūq, Thawāb al- 'Amāl (The Spiritual Rewards of Devotional Rituals), p. 50 and 72.

[2] Miḥrāb is a niche; a suitable place for performing the prayers, built on the exact direction of the Qibla in Makkah; it is the size of one person only in which the Imām leads the congregational daily salāt. M.S.

B. THE SOLEYMANI MIḤRĀB: At the time of the Othamani dynasty, Shah Soleyman expanded the Mosque and this Miḥrāb was built. At present time, the Imām of the congregational prayer leads the prayer from this Miḥrāb.

C. THE LOCATION OF TAḤAJJUD AND MIḤRĀB OF TAḤAJJUD: These are two holy locations where the Prophet in his private, solitary, nocturnal wakefulness in prayer (Taḥajjud) would perform a lengthy duā in a divinely Intimate dialogue with Almighty Lord. But the question is, why Fāṭimah's house is in the same direction of the Qiblah and of this Miḥrāb of Taḥajjud of the Messenger of God (s.w.a.)? What is the implication of this positioning? The answer is clear: The direction of the Mission of the Wilāyat and Imāmhood was and is and always will be inseparable from the Divine Direction of the Mission of the Prophethood. According to numerous statements of Qur'ānic rationale, the Divine Wilāyat, Prophethood and Alawī[1] lay sequentially in the same direction, as we plead "***Guide us*** [*O' Lord*] ***on the straight Path.***"[1] In fact, several statements have been made concerning the exegesis of the Āyah"[*This*] ***Path is the straight path Unto Me***"[2], among them one by His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) stating that: "Its inner meaning is [as God the High said): ''Alī 's Path is My Path.'" It has also been related that the Prophet publicly addressed Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) and proclaimed: "O Alī! You are the straight Path."[3]

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[1] The descendents of Imām 'Ali (s.m.a.). M.S.

D. NORTHERN MIḤRĀB OF THE MOSQUE: Before the change of direction of the Qiblah from Masjid Al Aqsā to the Ka'ba, the Messenger's Miḥrāb was situated on the north side of the Mosque. After the change of the Qiblah by God's injunction, the Messenger ordered a roof to be built over the location where this Miḥrāb is, transforming it into a place of rest and of residence for the Muslim Mohajereen who— following the Prophet's Path—kept emigrating from Makkah to Madīnah. Today the location of this Miḥrāb is the same location of the ṣaffāh's Companions.

2. THE PROPHET'S MANBAR (PULPIT)

Manbar is the place of (victorious) light, the location of public calling to the Divine Truth, and warning about the dangers of this world. It is built on a higher level so that the orator would have better view of all listeners.

On the west side of the Prophet's Miḥrāb, a marble Manbar (pulpit) has been placed. This marble pulpit was built at the time of the Shah

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 1 al-Ḥamd (The Opening), 5.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 15 al-Ḥijr (The Rock), 4. (God the Most High stated that the inner spiritual Sincerity is the Straight Way toward His High Court.)

[3] Yanabī'ā Al-Muwaddah, p. 133.

Selim (the Uthmanī ruler), but is located where the Prophet's original Manbar, which had been built as three stairs only, was placed. The prophet would ascend the pulpit and sit on the third one, delivering speeches to teach his people and to lead Man to spiritual purification.

What a sublime resounding voice it is that after fourteen centuries, is still audible and draws more than one fifth of the population of this earth to follow the same divine and enlightening path delivered, and taken, by that Master of Mankind. With this short introduction, the Rawāyat uttered by the Honorable prophet (s.w.a.) chimes clearly: "*My Miḥrāb is placed upon one of the gates of Paradise.*"[1]

The distance between the grave of the Last Prophet of God (s.w.a.) and his Menba`r is called the Prophetic Garden, or Prophetic Mosque. It is related by the Honorable Messenger that: "*Located between my Miḥrāb (niche) and my Manbar (pulpit) is one of the gardens amongst the gardens of Paradise.*" This distance is 22 meters long and 15 meters wide. The most meritorious location of the whole area of the Prophet's Mosque is this distance between the grave and the Manbar. According to the recommendation of His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.), since it is not always possible to be in this holy location (due to the overcrowding), once there, it is best to perform the Ṣalāt as much as possible[2]. It is also probable that the Holy grave of Fāṭimah' az-Zahrā (s.m.a.) may be in this location. What a compelling suggestion that in this location, filled with awe and sanctity, we recite the duās of Her Holiness (s.m.a.) with full attention.

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1. Mafātih al-Jinān, the section of Zīārah of the Apostle (s.w.a.).
2. Ibid.

3. THE LOCATION OF BILĀL'S CALL TO PRAYER (ADHĀN)

On the direction of the second chamber, over the Holy Prophet's head (in the grave) {s.w.a.}) and in front of the Prophet's Menba'r, Bilāl was making the Call for prayer (Adhān).

Bilāl the Abyssinian was the preferred Muezzin of the Messenger of God (s.w.a.). He was one of the profoundly devoted companions of His Holiness from the very start of Islam in Makkah, and one of the symbols of resistance against the heathen unbelievers such as Umāyah, Abū Sufyan, and others.

Bilāl did not have a pleasing and resonant voice, and was not good looking. He lisped, pronouncing for instance "As-had" instead of "Ash-had". Because of his kindheartedness, sincerity of character and Inward consciousness, the Messenger of Allāh therefore chose Bilāl the most apt to call people to prayer. His voice and the blackness of his skin evoked the ideals of Islamic equality, in which color, race, etc. are no basis of superiority over others. Bilāl did not leave Madīnah until the Prophet's Departure from this earth. Immediately after the Prophet's Martyrdom (s.w.a.) and many Muslims' immediate deviation from the prophetic path, he sadly left Madīnah, never to return. He did not want to witness the many disloyalties and betrayals that the majority group of Muslims inflicted on his holy Ahl al-Baīt (May the Infinite Allāh's Blessing and Peace be upon them). He settled in a region in Syria to guard the borders of Islam's territory. He never exchanged nor polluted his fervent love for Ahl al-Baīt (s.w.a.) with the exiguous and ephemeral wealth of this world. His esteemed resting place is in Bāb As-Saghīr (lit. smaller gate) in Damascus and is visited by the pilgrims of the Prophet and of his holy Ahl al-Baīt. May God's Blessings be upon Bilāl and upon all the companions faithful to the Prophet of God. Amen!

4. THE ḤARAM'S COLUMNS

The Prophet's Mosque – as we mentioned earlier – was originally located in the direction of the head of the Prophet in his Holy Grave (May the Infinite Allāh's Blessing and Peace be upon him). Every place, every single piece of this Ḥaram is filled with memories of rising Islam, of its Honorable Messenger and of his Holy Ahl al-Baīt (s.w.a.).

A. THE ḤANNĀNAH COLUMN: At the Prophet's time, before the construction of the Mosque was completed, in the location of this column there was a date-palm tree that had had its top cut off. The trunk was a suitable place to lean on. After the congregational prayers, the Prophet would lean on it while making speeches of spiritual guidance, or when correcting the Muslims' creeds through homilies, and in other occasions during daily conversations with people. Over time, the number of adherents to Islam increased and His Holiness would stand up on his feet to deliver his speeches, so that his voice could reach everyone. Then, the Muslims realized that the effort was very tiring for The Messenger. On the fifth year of the Ḥijrah, a Manbar (pulpit) was provided replacing the trunk of the palm tree in this location. When the Prophet ascended the Manbar for the last time, it is said that the palm tree started weeping, with a deep sound of sorrow expressing its loneliness, its feeling of being abandoned by His Holiness.

It is interesting to note that after the Hannānah's lamentation, the Prophet (s.w.a.) laid his hands on it and the trunk quieted down. Then His Holiness ordered that the trunk be buried in that same location, in the immediate vicinity of his Manbar, at the right side of his prayer place.

What we are to learn from this episode is expressed with verses written by a particular poet, notoriously consumed by love, that, O' brother! O' Sister!

> *"You are not less than a trunk*
> *Hannānah you become, become you a Hannānah!"* [1]

The cries and deep moans of the trunk of the palm tree should be expected of one who is distant from the Messenger. But, by comparison, we–who are chronologically afflicted and bewailed by thirteen long centuries of distance, far removed, separated from the Holy Ever-present Imām of Time The Holder of Wilāyat, the Last Holy Imām of the Behest of Muḥammad (s.w.a.) – when and where did we, even once, express our sorrow and grief at being left alone?

This column is an appropriate place to seek the Love, Instantaneous Awareness, protection and the Spiritual Union with the Seal of the Holy Imāms Hujjat[2] Ibn al- Ḥasan al-Askarī (s.m.a.).

B. THE ḤARAS COLUMN: This column Ḥaras (lit., to guard) is the place where Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) was posted to keep watch over and protect the person of the Holy Prophet (s.w.a.) against the envy-filled enemy, who sought to strike detrimentally against Islam by killing its Prophet. Near this column we beseech All-Mighty God to grant us zeal and courage to implement Islam throughout the earth, trying to revitalize, to resuscitate the Qur'ān, the Prophet's Tradition, and his Holy Ahl al-Baīt as well. This column is also called Musallā (the prayer place) of 'Alī, perhaps because

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[1] Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Balkhī, Mathnawī Ma'nawī.

[2] Hojjat, literally means the (Last) and unceasing Proof of God. M.S.

His Holiness Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) used to pray by this column.

C. THE WŪFŪD COLUMN: The people of all tribes and clans of Arabia, after travelling to Madīnah for the unique privilege of visiting the Prophet of God, would sit near this column beside His Holiness and present their issues and problems of everyday life. It is appropriate that near this column we pray to God the High, asking him to resolve the problems of our everyday life as well as of Islamic societies. It is appropriate that near this column we seek the mystical Knowledge of God, of His Messenger and of the Holy Imāms especially of the beloved Mahdī so that, God willing, we may be readied to exalt him and ultimately reach the Spiritual Union with His Holiness—to raise ourselves up to that level of Spirituality in which we can beseech: "*O' my Beloved Lord! bestow unto me the complete detachment from others so that I may be connected with You, and confer to 'the eyes of our hearts' the light of his delightful sight that is directed toward You, so that the eyes of our hearts pen'Itrate through the [last remaining] veiling light and reach the fountainhead of Your Mighty Grace, and connect our hearts to Your Holy Celestial Awe and Reverence.*"[1]

This duā, which contains unfathomable depths of meanings and reflects the highest spiritual achievements, reaches us from His Holiness Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.). And all the Immaculate Imāms (s.m.a.) encouraged people to read it meditatively.

D. THE SARĪR COLUMN: The Messenger of God (s.w.a.) would come near this location for periods of I'tikāf, which is when His Holiness would remove himself from his usual everyday public places, and go to locations such as this one for prayers and devotional meditations to Almighty Lord. It is said that the companions of His Holiness would spread the palm tree leaves here over the sand so that the Messenger of God (s.w.a.) could rest on them. So, taking hold of that very Reason of God's Creation of the Universes (who is the Prophet), you too come here as if it is your own prayer location, because it is here that the last Messenger of Messengers of God placed his holy feet.

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[1] Muḥaddis Qumī, Mafātīh al-Jinān, the Munājāt of the month of Sha'bān.

E. THE COLUMN OF TAWBAH: One of the most famous columns of this Sacred Mosque is this "Column of Tawbah" (Repentance). On it, it is chiseled: the pillar of Abi Lubābah. Abi Lubābah ibn 'Abd ul-Munẓir was one of the Muslims and one of the Prophet's companions who once, taken by negligence, succumbed to devilish temptations and disclosed military secrets to the Jews belonging to the tribe of Banī Ghuraīzah. Suddenly, he realized his own mistake and the tragedy of his act, and repented. He knew that with this level of misdeed, if God does not forgive him before death, he would receive the perpetual and everlasting chastisement. He preferred to punish himself by tying himself up to this pillar, and publicly made a vow that "unless the Commander in Chief, the Supreme military Leader of Islam, the Messenger of Allāh does not forgive me, I will remain tied up to this pillar." Not long had passed when the Āyah of repentance (Tawbah), Descended unto the Honorable Prophet of Allāh (s.w.a.), stating: ***And others*** [*among hypocrites*] ***who have confessed their sin***, [*these*] ***have mixed an act that was not good with another*** [*which is*] ***evil; It may be that God will accept their repentance;***

Verily, God is Oft-Forgiving and All-Merciful."[1]

This location is a place of seeking forgiveness and of turning to All-Merciful God, praying earnestly for the acceptance of our repentance, with the solemn intercession of the Holy Prophet of Allāh (s.w.a.).

F. THE MUKHLAQAH COLUMN: It is said that people who wanted to be in the presence of the Honorable Messenger of God, would, near this column "The pillar of Mukhlaqah", perfume themselves with delightful scents, vesting themselves with clean raiment so that even their appearance would be proper to visit the honorable Last Messenger of God. In this location it is also appropriate for the pilgrim to request from His Holiness to be "adorned" and "perfumed" with the extraordinary guidelines of prophetic ethical behavior. Assisted by Godly Favor and Kindness, may the pilgrim succeed to this high level of conduct and reach the rank of "Enlightenment" which is the Manifestation of Godly Theophanic illumination upon Man's very soul and existence. Amen.

It is said that the location of this column is also where the Prophet performed prayers, so some Raka`ts of Ṣalāt should be performed here.

G. THE QUR'IH COLUMN: Based on the Ayisha's narration, His Holiness the Messenger of God (s.w.a.) said that near this column there is a land that if people knew its importance they would cast lots for praying there. Over this column one will find the words "the Column of Ayisha". It is not improper that in this location one remembers the rejected state of those who deviated from the Path of the Divine Wilāyat.

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 9 al-Tawbah (The Repentance), 102.

H. THE FADAK COLUMN: this column is located exactly on the corner of Imām 'Alī's house facing the Prophet's Mosque. [1]There is no inscription or description of any kind engraved on this column. Furthermore, this section was not considered an integral part of the enclosed Mosque at the time of the honorable Prophet and the Holy Imām 'Alī' (s.m.a.). It is said that immediately after the Prophet's Departure from this world, in this very same location the handwritten document in which His Holiness donated the Fadak property to Fāṭimah was torn into pieces. We, by our own initiative, designate the name "Fadak column" for this location. Immediately after the Prophet's death (s.w.a.), the Divinely Commissioned Vicegerency to Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) was exploited by the pretender Caliph, who next fraudulently planned to impoverish Imām 'Alī and the Immaculate Fāṭimah by depriving them of their livelihood. He fabricated a false Ḥadīth from the Messenger that supposedly said, "*We, the group of Apostles of God do not leave inheritance.*" With this unjustifiable and demeaning excuse, he extorted Fadak – which was a donativum (gift) from the Messenger of God to the Immaculate Fāṭimah az-Zahrā— declaring it instead as a part of the Messenger's heritage. But Her Holiness Fāṭimah entered the Prophet's Mosque, confronted the Caliph and presented her persuasive argument with straightforward, irrefutable logic and ubiquitous intellectual reasoning: "*If my father said, 'We (Apostles) do not leave heritage', why then, in Ṣūrah Maryam is it said: '**O' Lord! Grant me from thyself an heir who shall inherit from me and inherit from the family of Jacob.**'*[2]***?*** *Did the Apostle Zachariah ask for an heir from God who could inherit from him and from the family of*

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1. Please see the map attached.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 19 Maryam,5 and passim. Please see also Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 59 (The Banishment), 7.

Jacob? Was not Zachariah an Apostle? How could have my father stated, 'We Apostles do not leave heritage'? Why do you forge a lie against the Apostle of God? The Caliph, ashamed and in acquiescence, gave the handwritten document granting the Fadak back to Her Holiness.

Fāṭimah (s.m.a.), while exiting from the Prophet's Mosque came across Omar near this same spot, at that time outside the Mosque. He asked Her Holiness: "What happened?" And in reply she informed him: "*I took back my own right from Abū Bakr.*" Omar, with ostensible anger and inherent enmity and rancor of character, took the document from her pretending to see it, but he dared to disrespect Her Holiness by tearing it violently and angrily into pieces. Her Holiness Fāṭimah, was execrated by Omar and was seized by his outrageous act. Then Her Holiness resumed herself and expressed her imprecations on him. [1] May we be not placed with those affected by the wrath of Her Holiness the Beloved of God, and be, instead, among the faithful and kindhearted companions of the Messenger of God's compassionate Fāṭimah az-Zahrā (s.m.a.). It is not unfair to say that near this column is the place to declare with loathing the Rejection and Disavowal of the enemies of the Ahl al-Baīt, as well as of those who exploit of the right of the Divinely Selected Ones.

5. THE ṢUFFA

At the north side and in the proximity of the Prophet's Mosque, we encounter a small pavilion type space. Here was the residence of the Ṣuffa companions. The Muhājirīn (the emigrants) coming from Makkah to Madīnah, among them the ones who did not have any domicile to reside in, sojourned in this sacred place. It is said that their number was 400. Here lived brave resolute men who stood high for the cause of Islam and whose hearts were filled with unfailing love and dedication. Among them were the first vanguards of Islam, such as Abū Darr, Salmān, Miqdād, and Ammār.

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[1] God duly fulfilled Her Holiness' wish. For more information see "The life of Holy Imāms", Ma'rūf Al-Ḥusaīnī, Vol.1.

In the seventh year of Ḥijrah, when the Mosque was expanded, Ṣuffa became a part of the Mosque.

It is interesting to note that "the House of Fāṭimah" the Miḥrāb of Taḥajjud, and the location of the Prophet's Taḥajjud all lie in the same direction as Ṣuffa. As mentioned earlier, the Miḥrāb on the northern side of the Mosque that is on the direction of Masjid al Aqṣā (the first Qiblah of Islam) is situated in this Ṣuffa location.

It is meaningful that this compound, including the Mosque and the living quarters of the Messenger of Allāh and of his Ahl al-Baīt, are next to each other; they are full of ever living memories of Tawallā, of reciprocal "Love" of "Affection" to be perceived by the people of understanding.

BAQĪ AND THE ḤARAM OF AHL AL-BAĪT

May the Infinite Blessing and Peace of Allāh be upon them.

The Baqī' cemetery is the place of Visitation (Zīārah) to the four Immaculate Holy Imāms of God (s.m.a.). Though about eighty years ago their Mausoleum was utterly demolished, the High Court therein was and is the site of come and go of all Holy Immaculate Imāms, and Fāṭimah az-Zahrā, as well as Lord's Angels. Whoever is gifted with the perceiving insights can see that the veritable celestial place, the Ḥaram of our Holy Imāms, is superior to the Garden of Paradise. It is the dwelling place of zealous believers. Certainly, there have been only few people who with the eye of Gnostic heart in love have perceived, and received, this truth. We also share the same belief, though our heart is veiled.

It is reported in the Ḥadīth that the Ziārah to each one of the Holy Imāms equals the visitation to the Honorable Prophet (s.w.a.), and the visitation to the Prophet equals one performed to God the High. Therefore, due respect and gratitude must be given to the Visit to Baqi, because it is the visitation to the Glorious God the High.

The least spiritual Attainment that it is mentioned in the Rawāyat for Holy Imām Ḥasan (s.m.a.) is Paradise.[1] Here, per se, is the Paradise. It has been stated by the Holy Sixth Imām (s.m.a.), whoever visit us in pilgrimage, the God’s everlasting blessing will permeates him/her and the sins will be forgiven”.[1]

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[1] Vasā'il, vol.18. section 2.

In Baqī, more than any other place, the recital of the Duā of Jamah Kabīrah[2] is apparent in its full vernal beauty and magnitude. In one of its passages, we recite, “*And although your graves are amongst and besides other graves, what a difference between yours and theirs!*’[3]

■ THE AHL AL-BAĪT (May Allāh’s Infinite Blessings and Peace be upon them.)

The Ahl al-Baīt (the Holy Members of the Prophetic House) are known to all Muslims and to most other religions as well. The Ahl al-Baīt are those Beloveds who were “clothed” with the Divine, Godly Investiture of Immaculateness. God inherently granted them Absolute Sinlessness and Infallibility (Iṣmat). They are: Imām ‘Alī, Fāṭimah az-Zahrā, Imām Ḥasan, Imām Ḥusayn and Imām Ḥusayn’s Immaculate offspring down to the last Imām, the Ever-lasting Imām al-Zamān (the Lord of Time). The holy bodies of some of these Beloveds rest in Baqī. It suffices to briefly mention each of them:

A. It is not unlikely that the Holy Grave of Her Holiness Fāṭimah az-Zahrā (s.m.a.) be in the Baqī‘. What can be said with certitude is that

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[1] Bihār, Vol. 99, Section 7, ḥadīth no. 1 , p.202.

[2] Jāmah al-kabīra, the General, Grand Recital that incorporates all Imāms (s.m.a.) in its fullness. Is the one of the best duā (spiritual visitation) which recited by Imām Hādi al-Naqī (the tenth Imām of Shī’a. This Zīārah is so highly filled with meanings that only those who have the profound knowledge about the Imāms (s.w.a.). About this Ziārah, Imām Khumaīnī who was one of the leading master of mysticism and Irfān, states every mouth besides the Imām’s recite this ziārah, his/her mouth will get “sick”, meaning no mouth has the capacity of reciting and containing its meaning except Imām Zamān’s.

[3] Muhaddith-i Qumī, Mafātih al-Jinān, a part of Zīārah Jāmi’ah.

Fāṭimah's House of Sorrow (Baīt al Ahzān) was in the Baqī'. This is because after the anguishing Prophet's death and all the subsequent disloyalties of his own companions against Islam, Her Holiness, seized by inconsolable sorrow, frequently would go to the cemetery in Baqī.

B. The graves of the four Great Holy Imāms of Shia`h are located in Baqī'. The following information quickly discusses in passing Her Holiness Fāṭimah and the four Holy Imāms of Baqī' (s.w.a.).

1. The birth of Her Holiness Fāṭimah az-Zahrā (s.m.a.) occurred in Makkah, on a Friday, the 12th of the month of Jamādī at-Thānī in the year of the reconstruction of the Ka'ba—five years before the Prophetic Mission started (562c.e). Her Martyrdom occurred on the third day of the month of Jamādī at-Thānī, in the eleventh year of Ḥijrah (580c.e). The Beloved of the Messenger of Allāh (s.w.a.) was martyred at the young age of 18 by the hand of hypocrites and those who claimed or pretended to be Muslims.
2. The Holy Imām Ḥasan al-Mujtabā (the chosen) (s.m.a.) was born in Madīnah on the fifteenth day of the holy month of Ramaḍān in the third year of Ḥijrah (626c.e.) and his Martyrdom occurred in Madīnah on the twenty eighth of the month of Ṣafār in the fiftieth year of Ḥijrah/680, when at age 48 he was poisoned by his own wife Ja'da at the instigation of Muawiyah, son of Abū Sufyan.
3. The Holy Imām 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, as-Sajjād (the Prostrator) (s.m.a.) was born in Madīnah. The day His Holiness was born falls between the 5th and the 10th of the month of Sha`ban. The year was 38 A.H/658 A.D. His Imāmhood lasted for about thirty-four years and his martyrdom occurred in Madīnah in the year 94 A.H/712 A.D. at age fifty seven by the order of Caliph Walīd Ibn 'Abd-ul Malik Ibn Marwān.

4. The Holy Imām Muḥammad al Bāqir (‘the splitter-open’, i.e. of knowledge) (s.m.a.) was born in Madīnah at the 3rd day of the month of Safar on the 57 A.H./676 A.D. His Holiness was alive and present for four years of the period of his grandfather, Imām Ḥusayn’s Imāmhood, and thirty-five years of his father’s Imāmhood. His own period of Imāmhood lasted about nineteen years. His martyrdom occurred on the seventeenth day of the month of Dhi al-Ḥajjah in the year 114 A.H /732 A.D. at age fifty-seven by the ruler of that time.
5. The Holy Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ja`far As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) was born in Madīnah on the 17th day of the month Rabi’ al Auwal in the year 83 A.H./702 A.D. He was present for twelve years during his father’s Imāmhood (Imām Muḥammad al Bāqir, s.m.a.), and his own Imāmhood lasted thirty-five years. He was martyred at age sixty-eight by the hand of Mansūr al Dawāniqī.

THE PRESCRIBED RITUALS FOR THE ZIĀRAH (VISITATION) TO THE HOLY IMĀMS IN BAQĪ

1. Ghusl (the complete wash of body) and Cleanliness to be in a state of ritualistic purity, the essential pre-requisite for every prayer or ritual.
2. Clean clothing (purity from any unlawful stain[1]) and a heart captured by ardent, melancholic love.
3. The Leave for entrance, and the permission to enter in Baqī.
4. The recital of Jām’ah al-Kabīrah for the Ahl al-Baīt.[2]

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[1] Such as blood etc. M.S.

[2] See the note 2, p.103.

5. And two Raka'ts of Ṣalāt for the visitation of each Infallible Imām in Masjid al-Nabī.

▪ THE ZIĀRAH 'S PRACTICES

In this section we will briefly elaborate on some of the rituals and conducts of the performance of the visitation (Ziārah) of the Imāms in Baqī:

1. In the sacred, celestial precinct of the Ahl al Baīt (s.m.a.) in the cemetery of Baqī, we must be cautious about how we behave during our visit and sojourn. Therefore, before the stairs which lead to the Baqī' gate, take off your shoes, and barefoot raise small, slow, gentle (pace), in calmness and humility, with a glow ebbing inside until you reach the Baqī' gate.
2. In a sentiment of affectionate devotion toward them attempt to talk in a gentle and melancholic tone with these Beloveds and, before entering Baqī, overwhelmed by sadness as you, like many others, may be, ask them for Leave to enter.
3. If the pilgrim reaches the level of uncontrollable sorrow and piety, this very change of psychological status is the sign that these Masters have answered and bestowed upon the pilgrim the leave for entrance. The Holy Imāms (s.m.a.) speak to few pilgrims so profoundly that its touching effect is visible in their soul, in their very being. When the Imāms speak, they are communicating with the very soul and heart of Man.
4. If we do not find any psycho-spiritual change in our heart and soul, we seek again their permission for entrance to Baqī. At any rate, the pilgrim should know that the "***instrument of the faithful***

believer is tears [*of lamentation and sorrow*]"[1].

5. After we seek and gain leave for entrance, while proceeding toward Baqī, we invoke Allāhu akbar in a gentle voice one hundred times, thus: First we invoke thirty times, then proceed; then we stop and repeat Allāhu Akbar and proceed; when we are near the holy graves, we must stop walking and, in the direction of the holy graves repeat the remaining forty Allāhu Akbars until we reach the very proximity of the Holy graves of these Beloveds. It is here that we start the recital of Jam'ah Kabīrah.

■ FORTY NOCTURNAL WATCHES AND WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WORLD

To visit the Holy Immaculate Imāms (s.m.a.), a serious "wakefulness" is necessary, along with a consistent dedication to the mystical pathway of Meditation and prayer. To seclude oneself does not necessary mean "separation" from the people surrounding you.[2] We have noted earlier about the month of Dhi al-Qa`dah and the first ten days of the month of Dhi al-Ḥajjah. The Prophet Moses (s.m.a.) the Interlocutor readied himself for forty consecutive days and nights to become the Recipient of the Glorifying Manifestation of the Lord. His Holiness said, "*Watch your tongue and speech, your deeds and your meal; do not consume unlawful meals and eat un-proportionally; control your sleep and let not your sleep control you.*" This Divine Manifestation, this epiphany of God the High unto Moses (s.m.a.) was not earned easily. "***When his Lord did manifest His Glory unto him, suddenly the mountain crumbled and***

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[1] Muḥaddith-i Qumī, Mafātih al-Jinān, The Prayer of Kumaīl.

[2] Solitude, a "peopled solitude," a voluntary solitude in heart." M.S.

***Moses fell dawn in a swoon.*"[1]

And the Honorable Messenger of Islam stated, "*Whoever with sincerity initiates for forty days the pathway to God, the fountains of Godly wisdom gushes from his or her heart to his or her tongue.*"[2]

Man can initiate the forty days of Devotional Meditation and prayers throughout the year, at any time. The month of Dhi-l Qa'dah and the first ten days of Dhi-l Ḥajjah possess special meaning which we mentioned in earlier pages.

▪ THE DORMIENTS IN BAQĪ

Some thousands of the earliest adherents to Islam, the first companions of the Prophet, and ṭā'ibīn (those who, after the Prophet, were contemporaries and companions of the Prophet's companions) and Ṣādāt (the progenies of the Banī Hāshim) are buried in the cemetery of Baqī. We will shortly mention[3] a few names of these dear souls:

1. 'Abdullāh, the august father of the Messenger of Allāh (s.m.a.) who died before the Honorable Prophet was born.
2. Fāṭimah bint Asad, the magnanimous mother of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), who raised and trained the Purest Human Being.
3. Umm al-Banīn, the honorable wife of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) and the mother of Abūl Faḍl and his three brothers who were all martyred in that hopeless massacre in Karbala.
4. Ibrāhīm, the only son of the Messenger of God (s.w.a.); he died at the age of seven; the Prophet was deeply moved and saddened

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 7 al-Ar'af (The Elevated Places), 143.

[2] Majlisī, Bihār al- Anwār, Vol.7, p. 240, 242.

[3] For more information, see Hāshim Ma'rūf al Ḥusaīni, Biography of the Holy Twelve Imāms, Vol.2, p. 142- 155.

by his death.

5. Ruqayah, Umm Kulsūm, Zaīnab and other daughters of the Messenger of Allāh (s.m.a.).
6. Ḥalīmah Sa'īdiyah, the wet nurse of the Messenger of Allāh (s.w.a.); His Holiness passed five years of his honorable life under her love and motherly arms and protection.
7. Ātikah, Habbānah, Ṣafīah, the Prophet's paternal aunts.
8. 'Abbās Ibn 'Abd-ul Muṭalib, the Prophet's uncle (on father side). The date of his death is 32 of Ḥijrah.
9. The wounded of the Uhud campaign who were immediately transported to Madīnah but later died and ultimately were buried in Baqī.
10. Some of the Prophet's wives were: Marīyah Ghubtī, Zaīnab, daughter of Jahsh, Umm Habībah, Ḥafṣa, Sawdah, Safīyyah, Jārīyah, Ayisha, and the honorable Umme Salmah.
11. The martyrs of the event of Hurrah: in the year 63 A.H, that is, three years after the Martyrdom of the Holy Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.) some of the prominent leaders in Madīnah broke their alliance with Yazīd (the son of Mu'āwīya the son of Abū Ṣufyān), because of his heinous deeds and outrageous behavior towards Imām Ḥusayn(s.m.a.). With their leader 'Abdullāh Ibn Ḥanzalah (postmortem title: the one whose corpse was washed by Angels) rose in revolt against Yazīd ibn Muāwīyah. Yazīd dispatched the army from Syria to confront the Mujahedeen in Madīnah. In this bloody siege, it is said they searched house by house, killed soul by soul; almost the entire population in Madīnah was put to death in a location called Howrah. In this massacre, it is reported that

about seventy thousand souls were killed from the Banī Hāshim, Quraīsh, Muhājirīn (the emigrants from Makkah to Madīnah), Anṣār (the helpers of Madīnah in early Islam) and the Shīa Ṣādāt, and their women kidnapped and raped. This tragedy of striking proportion is another abominable stain on the forehead of Āl-i Umāyah. All the martyrs of this inhumane crime are buried in the cemetery of Baqī.

12. Ismā'īl, the son of the Holy Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.) passed away in his father's life time. His Holiness loved him with much special care.
13. 'Abdullāh Ibn Ja`far, the husband of Her Holiness Zaīnab (s.m.a.); the son of Ja`far Ṭayyār, the brother of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.); and Muḥammad Ḥanafīyah the son of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.).
14. 'Aqīl, the brother of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), and the father of Muslim Ibn 'Aqīl, who was the older brother of Imām 'Alī (s.w.a.).[1]

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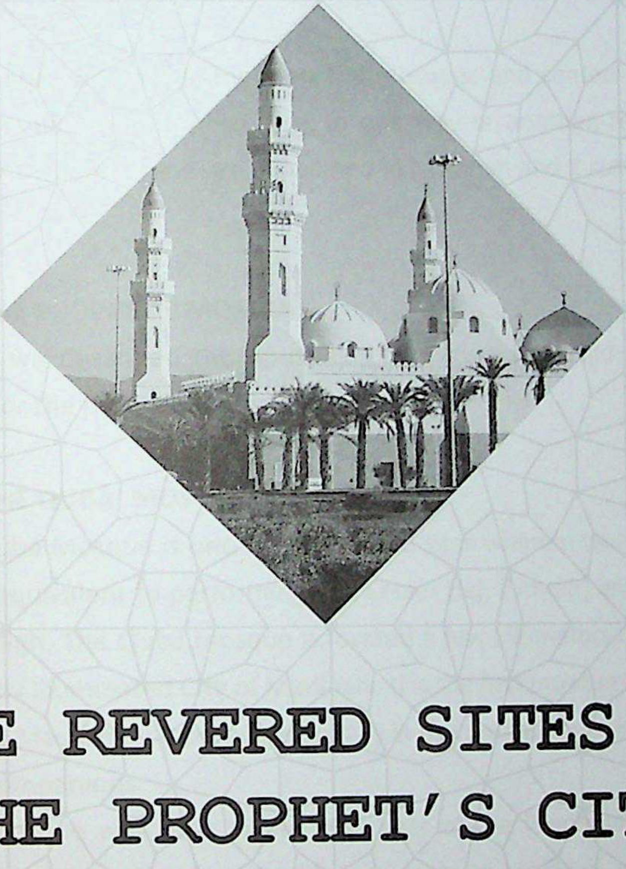
[1] For more information, see the Biography of the Holy Twelve Imāms, Hāshim Ma'rūf al Ḥusaīni, Vol.2, p. 142 -155.



THE REVERED SITES OF THE PROPHET'S CITY

In this chapter we will mention the mosques and centers wherein God is worshipped and which are, in one way or another, related to Messenger of God. These are all located in Madīnah and it surrounding areas.

■ 1. THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE

Earlier we described the Apostle's Holy Mosque (Masjid an-Nabī), essential for the purpose of this book.

■ 2. THE QUBĀ` MOSQUE

The Qubā Mosque is one of the revered sites wherein two Raka't of ṣalāt it is equivalent to performing one Lesser Ḥajj (Umrah) accepted by God the High. The Qubā mosque is located a few kilometers outside of the Divinely Illuminated City of Madīnah. It is the first mosque built. The Honorable Messenger labored personally in its construction, side by side with his companions.

This mosque was built in the 13th year of the Prophetic Mission; the Prophet, Emigrating from Makkah en route to Madīnah, stopped in this sacred location. In the span of a few days, Amīr al- Mu'minīn, the Master of faithful believers Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), Fāṭimah az-Zahrā (s.m.a)

Fāṭimah Bint Asad, and a few other of the Prophet's companions joined the Prophet in this sacred location; The Qubā mosque—it is narrated—is the first mosque wherein The Messenger of Islam (s.w.a.) performed the first congregational Friday prayer. In later years also his Holy Ahl al-Baīt and other companions continued therein to perform the congregational Ṣalāt.[1]

Although the Prophet's Mosque became the center of Islam and main quarter of its Prophet, His Holiness never ignored this mosque and on every occasion he was present there, he showed great enthusiasm and interest to perform the Ṣalāt to seek Nearness to God the High.

A reporter narrates: I asked His Holiness Imām As-Ṣādiq (s.m.a.), "We want to visit the mosques on the outskirts of Madīnah, from which one should we start?"

His Holiness advised: "*Start from the Qubā mosque and therein perform more prayers than in other mosques. The first mosque in this region wherein the Messenger of Allāh did perform the prayer is this Qubā mosque.*"[2]

▪ 3. THE JUMA'H (FRIDAY) MOSQUE

In his Migration from Makkah the Honorable Messenger of God entered the Qubā territory near Madīnah on a Monday and three days later on Friday the 15th of the month Rabi ul-Awwal he arrived in Madīnah. On that day, a place was assigned for the first Friday Congregational Ṣalāt in Islam. This mosque is also known as the mosque of Banī Najjār, Banī

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[1] For more information see the Ṣūrah Al-Tawbah, 108.This mosque's foundation is built upon (Taghwā) piety.

[2] Ṣadūq, Man la yaḥzuruhu ul-Faqīh, V. I, the section of The Superiority of the Mosques, p.229, Ḥadīth no. 686.

Sālim, and Wādī Masjid.

■ 4. THE MOSQUE RADD ASH-SHAMS (also called: AL-FAḌĪKH)

At the time of Banī Nazīr's siege, the Messenger was stopped and surrounded by the enemy for six days and six nights. Therefore the Messenger performed the Ṣalāt for six days and six nights. This mosque is called Faḍīkh (spilled wine) because, as history attests, when the Āyah for the prohibition of consuming alcoholic beverages was revealed, the Muslims immediately spilled the liquors they were consuming.

■ 5.THE MOSQUE OF UḤUD

On the spot where the Messenger of God performed the Ṣalāt, a mosque was built and named the "Mosque of Uḥud".

1. UḤUD: Uḥud is the name of a chain of mountains north of the city of Madīnah. Interestingly His Holiness the Messenger thus stated about the Mountain of Uḥud: *"This mountain of Uḥud loves us and we love it likewise."*[1]

2. THE BATTLE OF UḤUD: On this plain, the Uḥud fighters, under the Prophet's Command fought against the polytheists. 'Abbās, the Prophet's paternal uncle, who was still residing in Makkah, sent a letter to the Honorable Messenger of God informing His Holiness that the Makkah polytheists were mustering a formidable military attack. Their earlier defeat at Badr's battlefield was propelling them to seek revenge.

The Messenger—after consulting with the closest companions (Aṣhāb)—decided to defend Islam from outside the city of Madīnah. Thus, they set off for Uḥud and deployed one thousand fighters. In the early morning of the seventh day of the month of Shawwāl in 3 A.H., the Islamic Military Force lined in rows against the enemy. Some of the fighters who were skilled archers were chosen personally by His Holiness, and posted on the top of a hillock called Aīnayn (Watch Hill), otherwise known as Jabal ar-Ramā (the Archers' Hillock) to repel the enemy's cavalry with arrows. After Islam's victory, this group of fighters left their posts to have their share of booty with the other Muslim fighters. The enemy—while escaping in scurry from the battlefield—seized this golden opportunity. They maneuvered around "Watch Hill" and reached the battlefield from behind the Muslim fighters –who, including the archers, were busy dividing the booty. It was then that the Makkahns decimated Islam's Force. Muslims suffered an unprecedented defeat. The Messenger's forehead was wounded, his front tooth broken. Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) fought combatively and courageously. He made himself a shield protecting the Holy Persona of the Messenger of God (s.w.a). Imām 'Alī, drenched in blood, suffered more than ninety wounds. He fought so Valiantly it is said, that his sword broke. The echo of a resounding cry from heaven reverberated the entire battlefield in Uḥud: "*There is no brave man but 'Alī and there is no sword but 'Alī's Zulfaghār* (the nickname of Imām 'Alī's sword)"[1], May the Infinite Allāh's Blessing and peace be upon him.

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[1] I'lām al-Warā, p. 132.

Ḥamzah the Prince of Martyrs, who after Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) was the best and closest companion of the Prophet, was martyred. Hind, Abū Ṣufyān's wife (and grandmother of Yazīd) was still not satisfied with this massacre and victory. She ran to the battlefield and savagely mutilated Ḥamzah's lifeless corpse. She cut off the hands and legs; she mutilated the nose, fingers and made of them a string as if a necklace; she cut the stomach, pulled out the liver, and began to chew it.

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[1] Majlisī, Bihār al Anwār, Verse 20, section 12. The military expedition to Uhud, pg. 85, Ḥadīth no. 19

It was the continuation of this abominable event in Uḥud when, not less than forty (fifty) years later, Yazīd and his emissaries, the mercenaries Yazīdis were lent to officially spread the revenge of Uḥud as a justification to mislead the public opinion in order to be free and unperturbed by any feelings of guilt in committing the abhorrent act of slaughtering the Prophet's grandson, Ḥusayn the son of Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) in Karbalā.

It seems the line between Truth and Evil will remain established as such until the Glorious Day will dawn, and the Sublime Re- Appearance of the Mahdī's widespread Godly justice will occur proclaiming to all mankind: "***The Truth has come and the falsehood hath vanished.***"[1] The Honorable Messenger (s.w.a.) profoundly grieved about Ḥamzah martyrdom, and the anguishing view of his mutilated body. His Holiness wept profusely and covered Ḥamzah's body with his own Aba (mantle).

It is recorded in the much esteemed monumental treatise of Nūr al Thaqalaīn that: "When the Messenger of God viewed the heinously mutilated body of Ḥamzah cut into pieces, His Holiness vowed that he would avenge the act with 70 people of polytheists, as the blood for Ḥamzah's death. Then all-Glorious God descended this Āyah upon His Prophet: "***It has been violated few of you, restrain yourself, be patient, it is better.***" Ḥamzah is the magnanimous man to whom Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) later on referred to, when, after the Prophet's death, and after the Martyrdom of his last remaining protector, Fāṭimah az-Zahrā (s.m.a.) and after being abandoned and left single-handed, His Holiness said: "*If my brother Ja'far Ṭayyār and my uncle Ḥamzah were still alive, I would have*

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[1] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 17 al-Isrā (The Night Journey), 81.

taken back my Right from these exploiters."

Ḥamzah's Martyrdom was an irreparable loss incurred upon Islam and Muslims by the negligence of a group of people who longed for the wealth of this world.

It has been said that Fāṭimah (s.m.a.), would leave Madīnah for Uḥud every week to visit the grave of her father's uncle, the honorable Ḥamzah the prince of martyrs. Near it, one could find her weeping in desolation over what was happening to Islam. In the vicinity of the mountains of Uḥud is the site of 72 graves of Uḥud's martyrs.

It is unfair not to mention here the name of Hanzalih ghasīl al-Malā`ikah (the one whose corps was washed by the Angels). He, at the age of 24, on the night before the fight on Uḥud, was married and consummated the marriage. Next morning, he hurried straight to Jihād in the battlefront to protect the Messenger of God (s.w.a.). The Prophet stated about him: I myself saw the Angels washing his corps for burial. Yes indeed, the men of God with pure bodies such as this, thus ascended to the garden of Paradise.

Another name of an old man martyr should be mentioned: Musā'ib Ibn Umayr. Before the Prophet's Migration to Madīnah, he was the first Muslim missionary sent by the Prophet (s.w.a.) from Makkah. He called Yathrib's (Madīnah) population to Islam. The Anṣār's (the Helpers) faith is owing to this man's efforts. He and his sons were both martyred in this battle.[1]

■ 6. THE AHZĀB (PARTY) MOSQUE

On the fifth day of the month of Sha`wwāl in the fifth year of Ḥijrah, tribes and other parties of enemies of Islam united together. With great determination, three thousand fighters set out to march against Madīnah in order to annihilate Islam. The Messenger of God consulted the Muslims. Salmān the Persian prescribed a technique of warfare and advised the digging of a dry ditch where the enemy intended to enter the city. Encamping along the perimeter of the city, a menacing army surrounded Madīnah, and the siege against Madīnah pressed on for twenty eight long days.

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[1] Majlisi, Bihār al Anwār, V. 20th, Section 12, The military expedition Uḥud, pg. 26.

Finally, one day (during that siege) 'Amr Ibn 'Abd Wa'd— one of the most famous horseback fighters in Arabia – succeeded to advance across a part of the ditch that was more narrow than the rest, and challenged the Muslims to a duel. No one dared to fight with the giant 'Abd Wa'd, except for Amīr Al Mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abi Ṭālib[1] (s.m.a.). When Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) answered the challenge and proceeded to meet 'Abd Wa'd, the Honorable Messenger (s.w.a.) proclaimed, "Now Faithfulness and Unfaithfulness confront each other." No sooner had the duel started, when Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) fatally injured 'Abd Wa'd, then sat on his leg and finished him off. It was then that the Messenger of God stated: "*The one stroke of 'Alī 's sword (Zolfaghār) on the day of Khandaq [the Ditch], is superior to both Mankind's and Jinn's prayers until the Day of Judgment.*"

With 'Abd Wad killed by the Holy Hand of God, Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) the siege was ended and Muslims emerged victorious. The inveterate enemy escaped away and retreated to Makkah. It was during this epoch-making event that the Ṣūrah Al- Ahzāb (The Confederates) was revealed. It is for this reason the forefather of Islam—after the Messenger of God (s.w.a.)—is Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.). Or more precisely, the Messenger of God brought the Religion onto this earth, and, by God's Command, Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) implemented and, as a continuance of Divine Guidance, preserves with the Wilāyat. We cite hereunder the seven mosques built alongside the Ditch:

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[1] Translation: The Best of all men, the Ruler of the faithful believers. M.S.

1. The Mosque of 'Alī Ibn Abi Ṭālib (s.m.a.): This mosque is located south of the Mosque of victory (Fa`th), overlooking the territory of Baṭhān. During the siege against Madīnah, it has been reported that Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) chose a spot for his prayer and duās. Thus, on that spot this mosque was built.

2. Fāṭimah's Mosque (s.w.a.): This mosque is located at the south end of the hillock where Imām 'Alī's mosque is located. It was in this location that Her Holiness Fāṭimah (s.m.a.) brought for the Prophet (s.w.a.) a lure of bread as a gift she had prepared in Madīnah.

3. The Fatḥ (Victory) Mosque: This mosque is located on the northeast side of Madīnah and at the summit of the Mount of Sa`l, southeast of the Ditch. It is precisely here that the Prophet's invocations and prayers were fulfilled and the Holy Ṣūrah of Al- Fatḥ was then revealed, immediately after the news of the Victory of Islam's Army was brought to His Holiness Prophet Muḥammad (s.w.a.). On that spot then, this mosque was built.

4. The Mosque of Salmān the Persian: Is located next to the Fatḥ mosque.

5. Abū Bakr's Mosque.

6. Umar's Mosque.[1]

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[1] In these days they are emerged some group amongst the Muslims communities that consider all the sacred Signs of Islam are heresy and are seriously decided to destroy and obliterate each single of them. Unaware of the fact that these same sacred Signs of God are in fact the confirmation and, at times, the description of the History itself. In these days the pilgrims do not see any respect whatsoever toward the sacred

■ 7.THE MOSQUE OF DHU QIBLATAYN (THE TWO QIBLAHS)

This mosque has Two Qiblahs; one on the north side and one on the south side of the Mosque.

For over thirteen years in The Exalted City of Makkah, and for nine months in the Illuminated Madīnah, the Honorable Messenger performed the Ṣalāts facing the direction of Masjid Al-Aqṣā (the Furthest Mosque in Jerusalem), an act that drew the hearts of Christian people as

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and Pure "Intimate Friends of Allah" (Ulyā Allāh) and the close Companions of the Prophet of Allah (s.w.a.). The historic sites such as the battle field of Badr, of Uḥud, of Khaībar, of Hunayn , the narrow alley of Bani Hāshim, the grave of the known people who gave their life for the cause of Islam and historically recognized companions of the Prophet of God(s.w.a.) and the martyrs of very early Islam are , one by one invaded by the destruction; while in all other parts of the world the historic sites and archeological sites are revered and respected as the sign of their own cultural and religious and historical roots and cultural inheritances; and for them are the confirmation and implementation of their own roots and religion. It is indeed a duty to all Muslims to make these intellectually unsophisticated people stop the destruction of the historic sites and Muslims themselves not being their followers. Does it exist any other construction more historically antique than the Ka'ba? But this same very Holy Construction is willingly surrounded by the architecturally modern designed skyscrapers and hotels and modern grossly huge shopping malls so much so that the pilgrim being in the Holy Court Yard of Ka'ba (Ḥaram) there is no open space left before the pilgrim's eyes, for the Idol of the West replaced and show off so vividly in place of the idol of Hubal and Lāt over this same Ka'ba at the Prophet's time. May the servant of the two ḥarams (Khādim ul-Ḥaramayn) was indeed a true servant of the two holy ḥarams and the Theologians of the Sunni school of Thought were indeed respecting the true Sunnah of the Prophet of God (s.w.a.). We remain hopeful in waiting for that holy day – which is not so far away- in which the Sublime re-Appearance will occur, for it is him (may our soul be of ransom for him) that is true Prince of all faithful believers, the true Imām of Islamic Ummah. May the everlasting and perpetual Peace and Blessing upon him.

well as people of the Jewish faith to Islam. However, the Jews gradually took advantage of the fact that Masjid al-Aqṣā was the orientation point for Muslim prayers, and taunted Muslims for not having a Qiblah of their own. The Prophet (s.w.a.) asked Lord to change the direction of the Qiblah. His prayer was answered.

On a Monday, the fifteenth day of the month of Rajab, in the second year of Ḥijrah, while the Messenger of Islam was leading the Midday prayer, precisely at the second Raka`t, the Holy Angel Gabriel descended and the Āyah 144 of the Ṣūrah Al- Baqarah was revealed as follows: "***Verily, We see the turning of thy face in heaven*** [*in wait for revelation to change the Qiblah and*] ***We shall turn thee*** [*while in prayer*] ***towards a Qiblah that shall please thee. Turn then your face*** [*in direction*] ***of Masjid al Ha'ra'm*** [*Sacred Mosque in Makkah*]. ***Wherever you are*** [*O' you Muslims*] ***in prayer turn your face towards it***."

The Prophet and Imām 'Alī (may the everlasting peace and blessing of God be upon them both), while in prayer, turned their holy faces toward the Ka'ba and performed the remaining two Rak'ats of the midday prayer. The changing of the direction of Qiblah held several clear messages, among them are:

- The implementation of the centrality of Islam, i.e., Makkah and mainly the Ka'ba.
- The Muslim community's elevation as a distinguished entity above tribalism.
- The proclamation of cultural victory of Islam over that of the Jews and Christians.
- The victory of Islam over the Godless polytheists and unbelievers who stained Ka`ba and its surroundings with "idols" (physical as

well meta-physical).

- The fulfillment of the prayer of the Seal of Prophets (May the Infinite Allāh's Blessings and Peace be upon him).

8. THE SHAJARAH MOSQUE (Miqāt)

This mosque lies about seven to eight kilometers from Madīnah. Because of a tree nearby, this mosque is named the Shajarah (Tree) mosque. The importance of this mosque is that the Messenger of God (s.w.a.), during his last Pilgrimage, or the Farewell Ḥajj (the Ḥajjat al-Widā), entered the state of Iḥrām in this location. The pilgrims, who go to Madīnah en route to Makkah, enter the state of Iḥrām in this mosque.[1]

9.THE MUBAHALA[2] MOSQUE

This mosque is the reminder of a history-making event which the Holy Qur'ān has mentioned in an indisputable manner. In this sacred location, the Messenger of God, flanked by Imām 'Alī, Fāṭimah az-Zahrā, Imām Ḥasan, and Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.) were once engaged in a philosophical and religious contest and discussion.

In the tenth year of Ḥijrah, a delegation consisting of dignitaries of Christians of Najrān, (a Christian town on the route from Madīnah to Yemen) was received by the Prophet of God (s.w.a.). This delegation inquired about the persona of His Holiness Prophet Jesus (s.m.a.) in Islam. The Messenger of God (s.w.a.) clarified: "*Jesus was a servant of Allāh and was of the Signs, descended unto Maryam.*"

"How?" one of the most acquainted men of knowledge asked with wonder. "How is it possible a Human Being is born without a father?"

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[1] For more information see the section of Miqāt in the Chapter of Ḥaram in this book.

[2] Mubahila, lit .mutual cursing. M.S.

The Angel Gabriel descended unto the Prophet of God (s.w.a.) revealing this Āyah:

"***Verily, the similitude of Jesus with God is as the similitude of Adam; God created him out of dust** [without a mother and a father], **then [no sooner had God willed] said He unto him "Be", and then he "was."***[1]

Since the debate was continuing for a much extended time, God revealed the Āyah of Mubahila unto the Honorable Messenger as follows: "***And unto them who disputes with you therein** [the Argument] **after the knowledge hath come unto thee,** [say O' Messenger Muḥammad unto them], **come ye, let us summon our sons and** [you summon] **your sons, and** [we summon] **our women, and** [you] **your women, and** [we summon] **our Selves and** [you] **summon your selves; and then let us invoke the curse of God on the liars.***"[2]

On that extraordinary occasion that day–according to some the twenty first, to others the twenty fourth of the month of Dhi-l Ḥajjah–the Messenger of God, Imām 'Alī, Her Holiness Fāṭimah az-Zahrā, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn (may the Infinite Allāh's Blessing and Peace be upon them) were present.

The counterparts, too frightened to dialogue with the Last messenger of God, accompanied by his holy Ahl al-Baīt, sensed that if the discussion was getting too long, the danger of divine wrath to descend to vanquish them would have been very serious and imminent. Thus, they left the place of debate. They made a peaceful arrangement to pay the jizyah (the tax due from non-Muslims).

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1. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 Āl-i Imrān, 59.
2. Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 3 Āl-i Imrān, 61.

A note: In this sacred Āyah, Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) is known as the "Self"[1] of the Messenger of Allāh. In the wholeness of the Created Universe no one has this privilege of being described as the Prophet's Self, except Imām 'Alī (may the Infinite Allāh's Blessings and Peace be upon him).

■ 10.THE GHAMĀMAH MOSQUE

The first Holiday prayer that the Messenger of Allāh (s.w.a.) held in the outskirts of Madīnah was in the second year of Ḥijrah. Afterwards, Muslims built a mosque in this very location. They called it Qamāmah (literally: Cloud). The reason is that in this spot the Messenger of God prayed for rain; after his prayer, a cloud appeared and started raining conspicuously.

■ 11. BAĪT AL-AHZĀN, FĀṬIMAH'S HOUSE OF SORROW (May the Infinite Allāh's Blessing and Peace be upon Her Holiness).

Her Holiness went into mourning immediately after the Prophet chose the eternal Company of Lord on High over this world[2](may the everlasting Peace and blessings of God be upon him), and after the exploitation of his Succession and of the Divine Authority assigned to Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.), Her Holiness Fāṭimah az-Zahrā in those critical days chose four locations wherein she could protest to All-Glorious God against the respective exploiters, and also be in seclusion and solitude with her own continual inconsolable grief weighted on her mournful soul.

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[1] The closest etymological terminology could be the Latin divine Alter Ego. This Self, of course is not that self reduced to its earthly dimensions. M.S.

[2] It is reported that the Prophet (s.w.a.) in one of the last days of his honorable life, near Baqie` said "I was given the keys of this world and eternity, and now I am being offered the Paradise, and meeting with God. I am asked to choose between (one of) these two. And I have chosen Paradise and meeting with Allah." M.S.

1. The Messenger's Grave: After the Prophet's death, when the deceivers exploited the Succession to the Prophet, Her Holiness Fāṭimah az-Zahrā (s.m.a.), in mortal grief and peril, frequently reached for the grave of the Messenger of Allāh (s.w.a.) to declare her complains and protest.

2. Baqī: As the days and nights ensued, some of the so-called Muslims blocked Her Holiness to be near the Messenger's Grave. Shunned away, she then would leave Madīnah and go to the nearby terrain of Baqī. Her sorrowful weeping, pouring out of inmost exacerbating grief, added even more value to the already exalted Rank of Spirituality and sanctity of Baqī.

3. The House of Sorrow: The protest against Her Holiness increased and grew to greater piercing intensity than her anguish in those tumultuous days and nights. Furthermore, the exploiters of the Prophet's original and true Islam could not stand her brief outings in the Baqī. Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) then built a small shelter-enclosure for Fāṭimah outside Madīnah, behind the Baqī which was called the Abode (House) of Sorrow. Regretfully, this sacred location was demolished in the year 61 of Ḥijrah, and today a residential hotel stands in its place, but Shaīkh Amrī believes that Baīt ul-Aḥzān's location is circa ten meters away from the Imām Ḥasan's grave on the direction of Qibla'.[1]

4. The Cemetery of Uḥud: Her Holiness took Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn (s.m.a.)[2] and proceeded toward the Cemetery of Uḥud, wherein

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[1] Shaīkh Amrī (ninty four years old) is one of the great living personalities residing in Madīnah. He was one of the students of late great Ayatollah Seyyed Mahmūd Burujirdī and the late Ayatullah Khu'ī.

[2] At that time, children. M.S.

Ḥamzah, the uncle of her father, as well as her husband's, Imām 'Alī (s.m.a.) was buried.

It must be known that every single place, every single neighborhood, every quarter, every corner in Madīnah is the place of Fāṭimah's protest and rejection of the distorted Islam, of admonition and of leitmotif-reliquium by that very Holy Essence of God's Creation, the very ultimate and Final Reason of God's Gift of unlimited Mercy to Humanity, may the everlasting peace and divine blessing of God be upon her Holiness.

Where is the discerning, the cognitive eye to "see" the remaining vestiges she left behind? The unsophisticated, uncouth people who lack any kind of intelligence and mental brightness, little by little, demolish and annihilate all these traces of Fāṭimah.

12.THE ZIĀRAH TO NAJMIH KHATŪN

In the Madīnah Munawarah (The Divinely Illuminated Madīnah) the grave of the magnanimous mother of the Holy Eighth Imām (s.m.a.) is located. But Shaīkh Amrī believes that her grave is located in Baqī. If it is possible, visiting her grave, as a gesture of appreciation to her, is a privilege that does not happen to everyone.

THE VERITABLE RIGHT OF THE COMPANIONS (PEERS)

Brother! Sister! In this journey stand firm and enunciate every single one of the following points fully and correctly: the Right of your own "Nascent Fulfillment"[1] from your own journey which is Piety (Taghwā) and self-restraint; the Right of your "mount" which is your own body; the Right of your companions in journey, who are the zealous believers; the Right of your guide who is the Mujtaḥid and Marja, and the Right of your Chief, Sublime Guide of your caravan who is His Holiness the Ever-Present Imām-i Zamān (may our souls be his ransom).

The right of "Nascent Fulfillment" which is Taghwā (Piety, God-mindedness). Strive to reach all its levels; with it, adorn every single aspect of your life.

- ■ First, abstain from all sins and unlawfulness (as established by Shar'īah Law).
- ■ Second, practice all the compulsory rituals.
- ■ Third, abstain even from actions which may be theologically ambiguous in terms of right and wrong.

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[1] In other words, the ultimate reality to be attained which is the "fruit" that devoted pilgrim attains in the soul. M.S.

- Fourth, abstain from everything which impedes the mind and the heart/soul from incessant divine remembrance of God, whether or not Shar'īa law allows the distraction and the action.
- Fifth, perform all the recommended rituals to perpetually invoke and remember God so that one may be able to be at His service. By remembering Him, his or her own life finally flourishes.

The right of body: One must take care of one's body, so that it is able to obtain the "Nascent Fulfillment" —Piety— of the journey, and embark on the road to the ultimate goal. Along the road, your body must be able to carry you without fatigue. Certainly, the pilgrim should avoid overeating and indolence.

The right of companion of the road: On the vertical, straight trajectory toward the Nearness of Almighty God, be of help to your companion and accompany him or her during the journey. Prevent him or her from misdeeds or missteps. In brief, be and behave the way you want others to be and to behave with you.

The right of the Guide, Marja or Muftī: At every single step and spiritual station of the journey, include him in your best prayers and duās; try to perform and conform to the prescribed rituals the way he learned and taught them. We are the ones who benefit from their tireless effort and painstakingly, ceaseless dedication. We must therefore be thankful to these dear individuals who facilitate the on-site performance of the prescribed rituals for us.

And then,

The Right of the Chief, The Leader of Caravan: Remember His Holiness the Imām- Zamān (may our souls be his ransom), who is God's Last Divine living Proof before mankind: do not commit, at any point, any deed which deprives you of the Abundant Benefit of His felicitous prayers for you. Let us not, God forbid, vex the Beloved with your misdeeds.

Sister! Brother! Strive, reinforce, with fidelity, the sublime promise and Covenant that you made with His Holiness. Try to become the one who paves the ground and context for His Glorious Return (parousia). Place yourself on the path to his satisfaction and acceptance.

Always remember His Holiness. Perform the Ṭawāf around the House of Ka'ba for His Holiness. Perform the recommended prayers and rituals as a humble gift to His Holiness. Dedicate your inmost sincere performance of the rituals to his graceful High Presence. Prepare others as well to give bonafide assistance to that Grand Valī of God, that Beloved Vicegerent of Glorious God, so that, Insha'allāh (God willing) soon the day of his triumphant reign and governance will shine. Amen.

At the end, we raise our hands to heaven and we grasp to the word of God:

> ***O' Aziz!*** [*O' exalted one*[1]] ***distress hath seized us and our family; And we*** [*now*] ***come*** [*to you*], ***but with scanty capital: so give us full measure and bestow thy charity on us; Verily Allāh does reward the charitable ones.***"[2]

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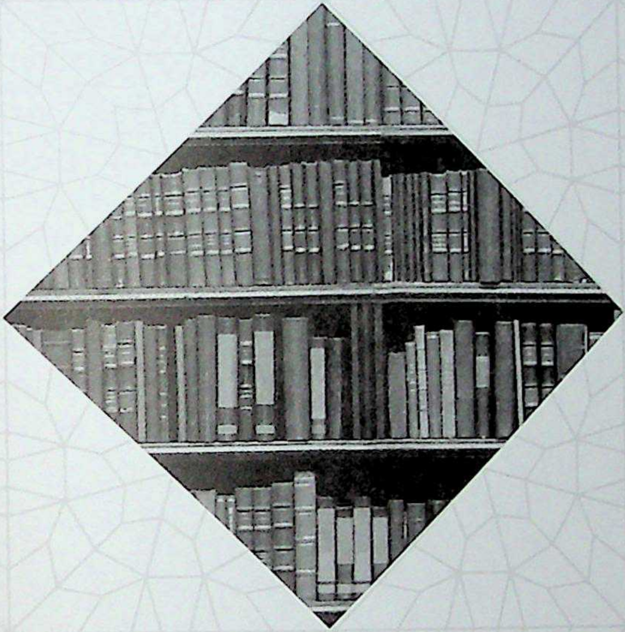
[1] Aziz could also mean dominant, ever-conquering and beloved. M.S.

[2] Qur'ān, Ṣūrah 12 Yusuf, 88.



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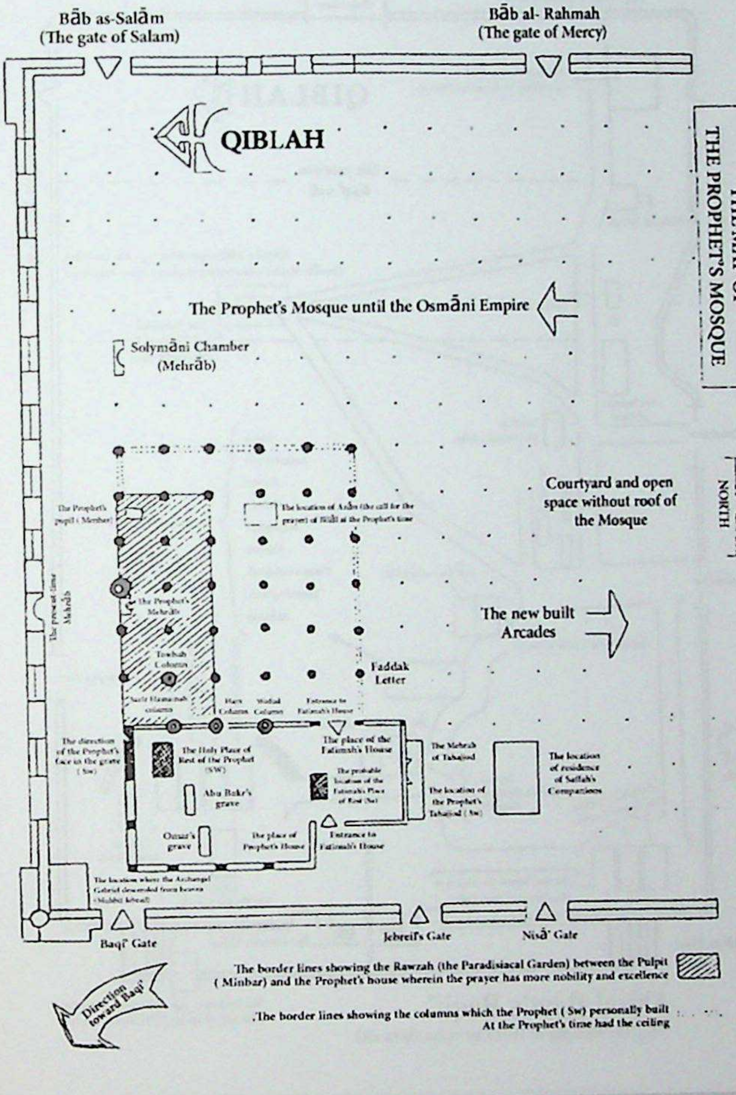
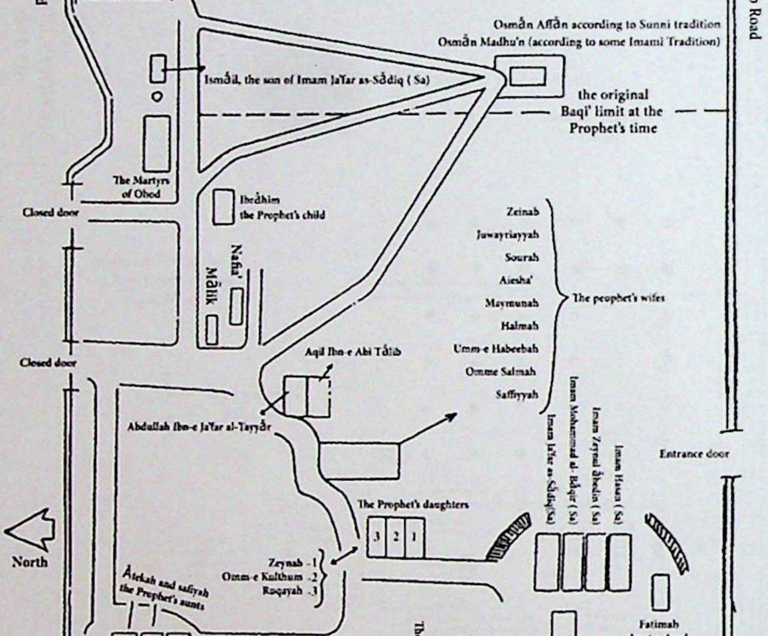
Thanks to be God from the Beginning to the End


Bāb as-Salām
(The gate of Salam)
Bāb al- Rahmah
(The gate of Mercy)
QIBLAH
THE MAP OF
THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE
The Prophet's Mosque until the Osmāni Empire
Solymāni Chamber
(Mehrāb)
Courtyard and open space without roof of the Mosque
NORTH
The new built Arcades
The Prophet's pupil (Member)
The location of Azān (the call for the prayer) of Bilāl at the Prophet's time
The present time Mehrāb
The Prophet's Mehrāb
Towbah Column
Sarir [illegible] column
Hars Column
Wofud Column
Entrance to Fatimah's House
Faddak Letter
The direction of the Prophet's face in the grave (Sw)
The Holy Place of Rest of the Prophet (SW)
The place of the Fatimah's House
The probable location of the Fatimah's Place of Rest (Sa)
Abu Bakr's grave
Omar's grave
The place of Prophet's House
Entrance to Fatimah's House
The Mehrab of Tahajjod
The location of the Prophet's Tahajjod (Sw)
The location of residence of Saffah's Companions
The location where the Archangel Gabriel descended from heaven (Mahbit Jebreil)
Baqi' Gate
Jebreil's Gate
Nisā' Gate
Direction toward Baqi'
The border lines showing the Rawzah (the Paradisiacal Garden) between the Pulpit (Minbar) and the Prophet's house wherein the prayer has more nobility and excellence
.The border lines showing the columns which the Prophet (Sw) personally built
At the Prophet's time had the ceiling

The map of The Prophet's Mosque


Baqi' Wall at present time
Closed door
Fatimah Bent-e Asad (according to Sunni traditions)
QIBLAH
Abdul Aziz Road
Ali Ibn-e Abi Tāleb Road
The previous Baqi' wall
Halimeh Sa'diah
Osmān Affān according to Sunni tradition
Osmān Madhu'n (according to some Imami Tradition)
Ismāil, the son of Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (Sa)
the original Baqi' limit at the Prophet's time
The Martyrs of Ohod
Closed door
Ibrāhim the Prophet's child
Nafia'
Mālik
Zeinab
Juwayriayyah
Sourah
Aiesha'
Maymunah
Halmah
Umm-e Habeebah
Omme Salmah
Saffiyyah
The peophet's wifes
Closed door
Aqil Ibn-e Abi Tālib
Abdullah Ibn-e Ja'far al-Tayyār
Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq(Sa)
Imam Mohammad al- Bāqir (Sa)
Imam Zeynol ābedin (Sa)
Imam Hasan (Sa)
Entrance door
The Prophet's daughters
3
2
1
North
Zeynab -1
Omm-e Kulthum -2
Ruqayah -3
Ātekah and safiyah the Prophet's aunts
Fatimah bent-e Asad
The Entrance Main Gate
Ommul- Banee' the mother of His Eminency Abul- Fadhl
Abbas The Prophet's uncle
Abadhar Road
The Security Office
The Previous place of burial of Ismail, (the son of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq's (Sa

Ahl-ul Bayt's Baqii'
(May the blessing of Allah be upon them all)

Ahl-ul Bayt's Baqii'